BUSINESS / B4

PLDT '06 net
income reached P31.5 billion

WORLD / A24

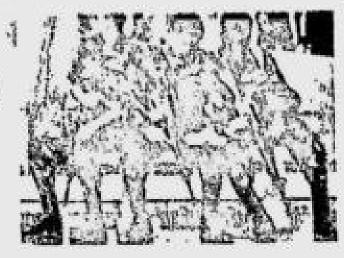
2 strong quakes kill
70 on Indonesia's Sumatra island

NEWS / A2

Joker's silence
on urban militarization deafening to leftists

NEWS / A2

Troop deployments in Metro
development training for new officers, says AFP



Int'l survey: Pinoys most aware of global warming

FILIPINOS WITH ACCESS TO THE INTERNET ARE among the people most aware of global warming, according to a survey by a multinational consumer research group.

The ACNielsen "Online Consumer Opinion Survey," conducted last November, covered 25,408 Internet users from 47 countries and territories in Europe, North America, Asia Pacific

INTERNATIONAL/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, March 7, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 89 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Batangas bishop talks like a 'true Vilmanian'

By Christian V. Esguerra

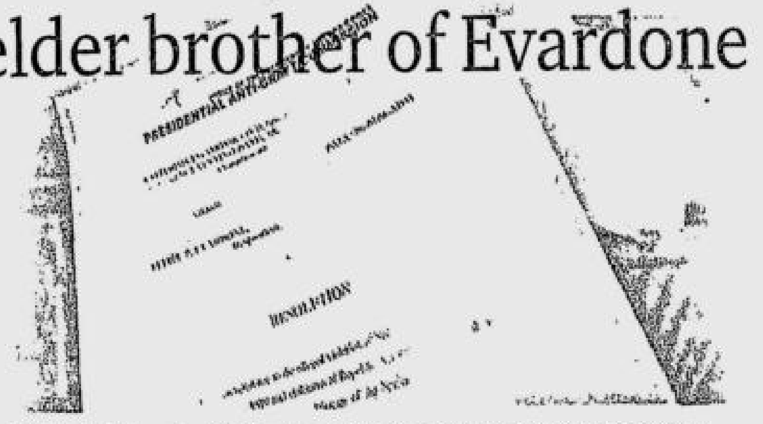
THE MAN OF THE CLOTH MADE IT CLEAR HE was not pro-Vilma but the words he uttered may well have come from a true Vilmanian.

Batangas' top Catholic official, Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, in an interview yesterday, ascribed to Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos virtues he said people wanted of a leader—sincerity,

BATANGAS/ A8

Palace sits on exec's case

Antigraft body seeks ouster of gov't printing head, elder brother of Evardone



THE CASE against Felipe Evardone is contained in the resolution. "Mystery" man has his back to the camera. JOAN BONDOC

By Norman Bordadora

MALACAÑANG APPEARS TO BE SITTING ON AT LEAST TWO recommendations by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission to dismiss the director of the National Printing Office (NPO) for graft and procurement violations, according to PAGC documents furnished the INQUIRER.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has yet to approve or disapprove the commission's two separate recommendations for NPO director Felipe Evardone's dismissal despite resolutions made in late January and transmitted to the Office of the President early the following month.

Evardone is the elder brother of Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, the newly appointed media director of the administration's Team Unity senatorial ticket.

The NPO is mandated by Executive Order No. 285 to print the government's standard and accountable forms, including election paraphernalia such as official ballots, election returns (ERs) and certificates of canvass (COCs).

The documents were made available by a

PALACE/ A6

Antiterror law: For bombers only

REUTERS

THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR, President Arroyo assures the nation after signing the Human Security Act, better known as the Antiterror Law. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon agrees. It took 12 years and 3 Congresses for the law to be in place.

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE LONG-SOUGHT ANTITERROR LAW was signed yesterday by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who said it would be used "against bombers and not protesters."

Republic Act No. 9372 or the Human Security Act (HSA) of 2007—which Malacañang said took 12 years and three Congresses to pass—will come into effect two months after the May 14 elections, supposedly to prevent its abuse by the authorities against the opposition. It will be automatically suspended one month before and two months after every election, in keeping with the amendment inserted by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

But militant groups were quick to denounce the HSA, saying it would infringe on basic civil rights.

"The building blocks of martial law are here—widespread political killings, the militarization of Metro Manila, and now a law that can violate the people's right to privacy, movement, security of person and political affiliation," Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes said in an hourlong protest rally at Plaza Miranda.

Elsewhere, Joel Maglunsod, secretary general of Kilusang Mayo Uno, warned that the government would "use the law to stop and suppress all forms of legitimate crusades by the people against antipeople policies."

"Let's not allow Ms Arroyo to bury our democracy for good," he said in calling on civil libertarians to unite and fight the HSA.

In a statement, Sen. Jamby Madrigal said the new law was "a license to kill."

GMA SIGNS/ A4

TRILLANES WAS HERE. At the Makati RTC on Tuesday for the hearing of the Oakwood mutineers allegedly led by Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes. AP

Lakas-CMD backs Vi; Kampi for Sanchez

By Michael Lim Ubac and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE JOCKEYING BETWEEN Lakas-CMD and Kampi for the control of key provinces in the country is perhaps nowhere more intense than in Batangas.

Yesterday, Lakas endorsed Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos as its gubernatorial candidate while Kampi backed reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez. *(Story above.)*

The two political parties belong to the ruling coalition.

Lakas-CMD said Santos would be its official candidate for governor should she decide to seek the highest elective post in Batangas.

"Definitely (Santos belongs to the) Lakas party," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, the Lakas chair for Southern Tagalog which includes Batangas, told reporters yesterday.

Ermita pointed out that Santos was the party chair for Lipa.

Santos, an actress-turned-politician, hinted that she would run for governor when she told her supporters Monday that she would make her decision within the week, not as a wife or mother, but as a leader of the people.

Ermita's son Edwin, a banker, is planning on being Santos' running mate.

Ermita announced his preference for Santos hours after Vice Gov. Ricky Recto announced over ANC that he would not give way to Santos and still run for governor. *(Story on Page A8.)*

Ricky, the older brother of Santos' husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, is expected to run as the gubernatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition.

Ermita said he was not "speaking for the national government" when he claimed that it would be logical to choose Santos over Recto or Sanchez as the Lakas gubernatorial candidate.

LAKAS-CMD/ A8

'DOA' IN PHILADELPHIA

They went all the way to US to learn what 'final' means

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT TOOK A TRIP TO PHILADELPHIA FOR them to learn what the word "final" means.

It means that the nurses who passed the leak-tainted June 2006 license examination will have to retake portions of the exam—or they can kiss their American dream goodbye.

That was the message the US Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) delivered to members of a Philippine team that President Macapagal-Arroyo sent to Philadelphia to make an appeal in behalf of the Filipino nurses.

The team failed to convince CGFNS officials to reconsider their decision to bar the affected nurses from working in the United States unless they retook Tests 3 and 5 of the exam, according to a member of the team and to a CGFNS statement posted on its website yesterday.

"After listening to and reviewing the concerns of the delegation, (our officials) explained that CGFNS' decision was based on the requirements of US law and was not subject to renegotiation or further review," the CGFNS said.

It also advised Filipino officials to start working on the voluntary retake of the exam.

"The sooner the responsible authorities in the Philippines move forward to implement the steps for (a retake), without the need for Philippine nurses to surrender their current licenses in order to do so, the better it will be for all concerned," the CGFNS said.

Asked if the notice posted on the website was correct, the president of the anti-retake Alliance of New Nurses, Renato Aquino, a member of the Filipino delegation, told the INQUIRER: "Yes, it is."

The two sides met for three and a half hours.

"We were able to explain our side," Aquino said from Philadelphia. He stressed that the delegation members paid their own way.

"No government spending (here)," he said.

In its statement, the CGFNS said it had closely monitored what happened during last year's exam. It said it had sent a fact-

THEY WENT/ A8

Revilla leaves DNA samples with NBI in case of paternity claims

By Nini Valera
Entertainment

FORMER ACTOR AND SEN. RAMON Revilla Sr. left samples of his DNA with the National Bureau of Investigation so that anybody claiming to be his child after he dies could be tested against it.

Revilla, who turns 80 on Thursday, told the INQUIRER on Monday that he had a DNA test five years ago to determine the paternity of a child whose mother claimed he had fathered.

"I was then 75," he said in Filipino. "I couldn't believe that I would still be able to father a child. So I had our DNAs tested, including the DNA of the child's mother. When the results came, the DNAs matched. I am, indeed, the child's father."

The child, a girl, is now in pre-school, Revilla said.

"She's a very bright girl," he said, beaming.

According to urban legend, Revilla has fathered at least a hundred children by different women.

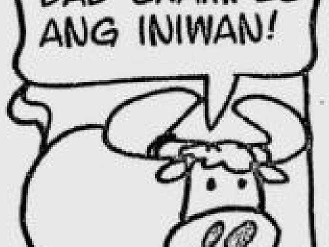
"I don't have that many children," he said. "My daughter Andrea (by wife Azucena Mortel) keeps a list, and it's far less than a hundred."

He said that he stipulated in his will that anyone claiming to be his child must undergo a DNA test.

Revilla admitted that he was not proud of having fathered dozens of children by different women.

"I should not be admired for this," he said. "It's wrong, very wrong. Although I

REVILLA/ A4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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/06/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

AFP: Soldiers in Metro are training

By Christine O. Avendaño and Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY OFFICERS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL DEployed to some of Metro Manila poorest barangays are there as part of their training before being sent abroad on peacekeeping missions, the military and police said yesterday.

Denying again that the troops were there to campaign against militant party-list groups and root out activists, military information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said the 243 officers and enlisted personnel deployed to the barangays were part of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Community Development (Code) training for new officers.

The officers and their men are slated for peacekeeping operations abroad, he said.

"While waiting for their deployment, they are undergoing training... basically in community development where they... immerse themselves in barangays," he said.

He said that eventually the troops would conduct medical and dental operations and "limited engineering works."

Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, deputy chief for administration, backed the military's contention, saying the troop deployment was part of their training.

He also objected to allegations the soldiers were deployed because the PNP was unable to maintain the law and order in those areas.

In a hastily called press conference, Razon told reporters yesterday the soldiers were undergoing civil military operations (CMO) training in urban communities.

"The deployment is part of the CMO training in the National Capital Region before they are sent to the field," Razon said.

Earlier, AFP National Capital Region Command (NCRComm) chief Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said the soldiers were deployed to enforce law and order in the barangays—which Bacarro said yesterday were chosen because they were where the problems of illiteracy, poverty and joblessness were greatest.

But Razon said the task of maintaining law and order in Metro Manila and around the country belonged solely to the PNP.

"I think that statement was wrong and inaccurate. The PNP is on top of the situation. The military should not be engaged in anticrime operations," Razon said.

He assured the public the PNP "would not allow the soldiers to harass anyone." He said the police had yet to receive a single complaint against the soldiers, "but if we do we will take action.

Bacarro said the military would maintain a presence in 27 Metro Manila barangays unless the Commission on Elections ordered them out of these areas.

Actually, he said, barangay residents were "happy" with the presence of the soldiers.

With Tarra Quismundo

Where's Joker? militants wonder

ARROYO

WHERE IS SEN. JOKER ARROYO when you need him?

Arroyo's silence on the "militarization" of Metro Manila barangays has been deafening, according to some left-wing groups.

The militant groups that have called for the immediate pullout of military troops from urban slum areas said they were surprised by Arroyo's "self-imposed" silence. Arroyo had forged a reputation of being a courageous human rights lawyer.

"What happened to this self-confessed human rights advocate? It is time to open his big mouth and speak out against this state-sponsored terrorism and military imposed de facto martial law in Metro Manila," the militant party-list group Anakpawis and left-wing fisherfolk alliance Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya (Pamalakaya) said in a joint statement furnished the INQUIRER yesterday.

"Senator Arroyo has chosen to remain silent despite the fact that the situation merits his involvement as a staunch defender of the Constitution and human rights and civil liberties," said Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya national chair and Anakpawis nominee in the party-list election.

"*Hindi ba sabi niya, pag* bad *ka, lagot ka kay* Joker Arroyo (If you're bad, you better watch out). This political ad will remain a rhetorical election campaign piece unless Senator Arroyo breathes life into it through concrete actions," Hicap said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon, with Jerome Aning*

Atong Ang seeks medical leave

By Jocelyn R. Uy

JAILED ESTRADA BUDDY, CHARLIE "Atong" Ang, is sick and needs to see a doctor soon, his lawyers said yesterday.

In a motion filed with the Sandiganbayan Special Division yesterday, lawyers Ruth Castelo and Alfredo Villamor said Ang had been diagnosed with acute glomerulonephritis, an inflammation of the internal kidney structures resulting from hypertension, and should be taken to a "major hospital."

Ang, a co-accused in the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada, is being detained at the Special Intensive Care Area of the Metro Manila District Jail in Bicutan where, according to his lawyers, there is no medical expert to attend to his case.

It was a jail resident nurse who recommended that Ang undergo "further medical evaluation and management at the nearest government hospital," lawyers said.

Worried that the swelling on both Ang's ankles and feet could be a symptom of an impending stroke or heart attack, lawyers requested the antigraft court to immediately allow Ang to leave jail and be brought to the Metropolitan Hospital in Manila, where his personal physician holds clinic.

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'Nuisance bets' make last-ditch plea to Comelec

By Nikko Dizon

FOURTEEN OF THE 42 SO-called "nuisance candidates" yesterday made a last-ditch appeal to convince the Commission on Elections (Comelec) en banc not to disqualify them from running for a Senate seat in the coming May elections.

University professor and senatorial aspirant, Danton Remoto, presented to the Comelec commissioners his impressive educational background, career achievements, and on-going advocacy to fight for equal rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) sector in the country.

But when Remoto mentioned Ang Ladlad, the organization he founded and now heads, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos, Sr. told the professor that the Comelec denied its petition for party-list accreditation since his group's members would not come out of the closet.

Unflustered, Remoto argued that one of the reasons he was running for senator was to craft laws that would allow those still in the closet to "come out with dignity."

Remoto said Ang Ladlad's nationwide campaign would be spearheaded by the organization's provincial coordinators.

Commissioner Ressurreccion Borra then asked that if there was Ang Ladlad, why isn't there a "Partido" for straight men, or "Partida" for straight women.

Remoto replied that it was for these sectors to decide whether they want to formally organize themselves.

But the repartee between the Comelec commissioners and Remoto was nothing compared to the colorful show staged by the other so-called 'nuisance candidates' who gave the officials a much-needed respite from the grueling work at the Comelec as the agency prepares for an election which would be a "litmus test" of its credibility and integrity.

As the commissioners led by Abalos, stressed that senatorial aspirants should show they could launch a nationwide campaign, one of the 'nuisance candidates' said he would bank on the popularity of his nickname as it is similar to a brand of razor blade, "Dorco."

The candidate, Elpidio Tuazon, said he was a teacher by profession.

Tuazon said that by declaring him a nuisance candidate, the Comelec commissioners have shown they were ungrateful to their own teachers.

Another "nuisance" candidate, newspaper columnist and NGO volunteer, Wilhemina Orosco, told the Comelec en banc that she had "reservations" to the term nuisance candidate as it demeaned a person's sincere intention to serve his or her country.

Orosco told the commissioners that leaders in Payatas and Smokey Mountain had pledged their support to her candidacy. She added she was also writing a comic magazine about herself and hoped to print some 100,000 copies for distribution nationwide.

Another "nuisance" candidate, Eduardo Flaminiano, who claims his family owns a movie outfit, said he has a P500 million budget for his nationwide campaign.

No campaign trail for Gringo

DETAINED SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan will not be hitting the campaign trail anytime soon after a Makati court denied his motion to post bail for lack of merit.

Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 said allowing Honasan to post bail would prejudice the ongoing reinvestigation of his coup d'etat case by the Department of Justice.

He said granting any petition for bail would require the prosecution to show that the evidence against the accused was strong.

"If due course to the motion will be given, this will put the state prosecutors in a position wherein their impartiality and fairness will be affected and questioned in conducting its reinvestigation," Pimentel said.

The judge, who gave the state prosecutors 60 days to conduct the probe, said the case was effectively suspended while this was being done.

Honasan, who is running as an independent candidate, is detained at the Fort Sto. Domingo in Laguna.

He is facing a coup d'etat charge for allegedly leading the failed July 2003 coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny, and a rebellion charge for allegedly conspiring to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

'Aquino' name not enough to win, Noynoy told

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

"AN 'AQUINO' NAME IS NOT enough to win an election" senatorial aspirant Prospero Pichay said yesterday, taking a dig at opposition candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III for his "audacity" in pitching for the 2010 presidential bid of Sen. Mar Roxas during one campaign sortie.

The young Aquino speaks "as if he was a shoo-in in the Senate," quipped Pichay of the administration's Team Unity.

"A name is not enough anymore. It has to be backed up by strategy, record and performance," said Pichay in an interview during their own campaign sortie at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Lots of tools

"At this time, with the advent of electronic media, candidates have a lot of tools at their disposal that could change the mind of the public (about candidates)—including the namesakes of popular politicians," said Pichay.

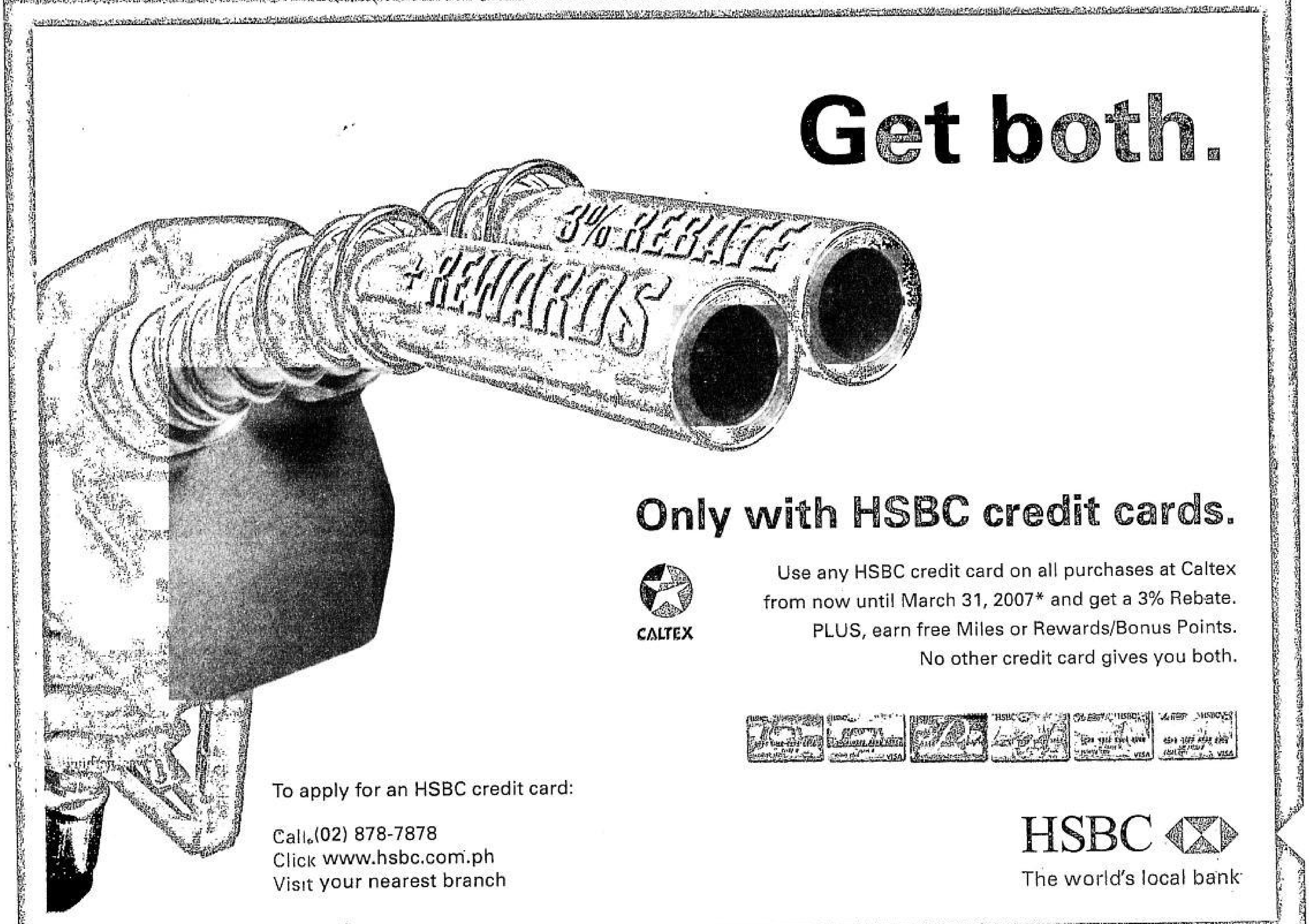
Pichay, who is so far the biggest television ad spender among the candidates with an average bill of P16 million a week, said it was improper for Aquino to talk about the presidential elections three years from now when he has yet to win in the upcoming May elections.

"That's not good. You run for senator not because you want to serve one individual but because you want to serve the Filipino people. If Noynoy will say he wants to help Mar become President then he will be senator of Mar Roxas and not a senator of the Filipino people. As a friend to Noynoy, change your style," advised Pichay.

In an INQUIRER story, Aquino was quoted as saying: "We in the Liberal Party will be the dominant political party by 2011 and we intend to present to the national electorate Sen. Mar Roxas, who will stand as the symbol of good governance based on principled politics."

Pichay admitted that he was playing catch up with formidable rivals in the senate derby and his heavy spending on TV ads was his best means to jumpstart his campaign, he said.

AQUINO



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Rights body to insist on power to see arrested terror suspects

By Volt Contreras

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights will demand to see arrested terror suspects in the flesh while they are undergoing interrogation.

CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing yesterday served notice to authorities that the commission would assert its "visitorial powers" guaranteed by the Constitution to ensure the protection of suspects during the three-day period allowed by the Human Security Act of 2007 for the military and police to hold persons without proper charges.

"There must be transparency. OK, you can hold this person for three days, but [we] must know where he is," Quisumbing said in an interview.

The INQUIRER had sought her comment on the new law, particularly on provisions that might pose serious concerns for the CHR.

"You must allow the CHR to come and visit. The Red Cross must also be allowed to visit and to conduct medical examinations… There are ways to safeguard a person's physical and mental security within those three days," she said, adding:

"Certainly we would like to be informed. This is something we expect [from the authorities]. The registration of the whereabouts of the detainee should be available to us."

Watered down

Quisumbing agreed with the defenders of the bill that the final version had been "watered-down," at least concerning the detention period.

She pointed out that the antiterror bills of the United States and the United Kingdom, for instance, allowed for longer detention of a suspect without charges.

But Quisumbing said the CHR had yet to formally receive a copy of the new law—or of its final draft—during the weeks when it was awaiting President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature.

She based her remarks yesterday on news reports citing some of the main features of the controversial measure.

"Certainly we are going to look into the law," Quisumbing said, adding that CHR regional directors, for example, "need[ed] to see and anticipate the possible issues, especially in relation to extrajudicial killings."

Asked about the extent of the CHR's participation in the crafting of the new law, Quisumbing said the last time she attended deliberations on the bill was when it was still at the "committee level" in Congress.

"We submitted position papers to keep reiterating the safety nets…but were not asked to come [as often]," she recalled, adding that the CHR was "not formally part of the lawmaking process" and was merely called upon to "give advice to the government, and monitor."

Regional monitoring

Quisumbing said the CHR's monitoring activity would cover the setup of "regional centers" that could receive "complaints" from aggrieved parties.

"The very nature of an antiterror bill is that you are going to threaten the safety area for the protection of human rights. That is why it is very important for us to monitor the incursion into individuals' human rights while protecting the public's right to security. These two must be harmonized," she said.

Antiterror law: For bombers, not for protesters

From page A1

"With the signing of this draconian law, Ms Arroyo has arrogated unto herself the powers of a dictator to punish her enemies by branding them terrorists," Madrigal said.

"Those who have supported and pushed for this law have the blood of Filipinos on their hands," she said.

No safe haven

Earlier in the day, the President announced at the convention of the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines that she was about to sign the bill into law.

"Our message to the world is to have no safe haven for terror in our country, and to have a strong democratic society driven by freedom under the rule of law," she said in her speech.

She added: "We will keep bombers at bay as we drive up confidence in the Philippines, grow jobs, increase incomes and lift the people from poverty.

"Law-abiding Filipinos have nothing to fear in this law for it is a weapon that shall be wielded against bombers and not protesters. Let us all unite behind a renewed campaign against terror and drive out this scourge to a modern Philippines."

The President signed the HSA in Malacañang, in the presence of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and other sponsors of the measure from the Senate and the House, as well as diplomats from 27 countries, including the United States and Australia.

The Philippines had been under pressure from its allies to come up with an antiterror law because of the presence in the country of extremists with links to the Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaida terror networks.

Although he was a principal sponsor of the measure, Senate President Manuel Villar, who is running for reelection under the Genuine Opposition, was a no-show at the signing ceremony. He was represented by Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Alfredo Lim and Ramon Revilla Jr.

Strong antiterror drive

Ms Arroyo told the Provincial Board Members League that the Philippines was being praised in an ongoing antiterror conference in Indonesia because of its strong antiterror campaign.

She said the signing of the HSA would bring to "a higher level" the Philippines' "successful campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, JI and al-Qaida cells now being carried out in a broader front of national and regional vigilance."

She also said the HSA was "a landmark in the battle against evil waged by all freedom-loving Filipinos and allies in the world."

"It upgrades our preemptive capability to check the conspiracies of harm and mass murder, and contain the movement of arms and funds to sow mayhem," she said.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, who had introduced extensive amendments to the terror bill, said Pimentel's amendment on the suspension of the law during elections was intended to prevent the possibility of the law being used against the opposition.

But Drilon, who said he had not been invited to the signing ceremony, conceded that the final version was practically of no use: "I'm not in favor of the administration, but that law is toothless. We in the Senate made sure civil liberties are protected. But [in the final version] there is an overabundance of civil liberties such that some may even say civil liberties are overprotected."

40 years max

"At the end of the day," he said, "it is the integrity, competence and trustworthiness of our law enforcers and the justice department that will spell the difference between the success or failure of the antiterror law."

The HSA makes terrorism a crime punishable with a maximum prison term of 40 years. It defines terror as the act of "sowing and creating a condition of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace, in order to coerce the government to give in to an unlawful demand."

While the original Senate bills listed specific crimes considered as terrorism, the final measure cited violations of 12 provisions of the Revised Penal Code, including piracy, mutiny, rebellion or insurrection, coups, murder, kidnapping, destruction of property or arson, use of toxic substances and others committed as an act of terror.

The law allows the detention of suspects for three days without charges, wiretapping of communications of terror suspects, and monitoring of bank accounts. It also provides for the outlawing of groups suspected of plotting terrorism.

As embodied in Senate Bill No. 2137 and House Bill No. 4839, it also enshrines the rights of people detained on suspicion of terror or conspiracy to commit terrorism.

The law will be implemented by the Anti-Terrorism Council chaired by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez is the vice chair and Secretaries Alberto Romulo (foreign affairs), Hermogenes Ebdane (defense), Ronaldo Puno (interior) and Margarito Teves (finance) and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales are the members.

Congratulations

In separate statements, the United States and Australia congratulated the Philippine government on the signing of the HSA.

"This new law will help provide Philippine law enforcement and judicial authorities with the legal tools they need to confront the threats posed by international terrorism, while ensuring protection of civil liberties and human rights," the US Embassy said.

It said the United States would continue to work with the Philippines as a partner and ally in the war on terrorism by providing technical assistance and training and sharing information.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said the HSA would strengthen the Arroyo administration in investigating, prosecuting and bringing to justice terrorists and their supporters who are captured in the Philippines.

Downer said the passage of the law was complemented by the Philippines' strong commitment to implement counterterrorism measures.

Extension of US war

But according to Bayan chair Carol Araullo, the antiterror law is the legal extension of the US war on terror.

"At a time when the whole world is reviewing and rethinking antiterrorism legislation, the Philippines continues to cling to the US terror war," she said.

"The US is probably jumping with glee with the signing of this piece of repressive legislation, especially at a time when US foreign policy is so isolated by the international community."

Wilson Fortaleza, Sanlakas national president, said in a statement that the HSA's definition of terrorism was so vague that "any political democratic exercise critical of the ruling government" would be deemed unlawful.

"The passage of the terror bill will usher in the dark ages for civil liberties and democracy and will be used to trample our human rights as citizens. More alarmingly, the terror law will be aimed at quelling legitimate dissent," he said.

The KMU'S Maglunsod said the new law could also be used to justify the harassment of leftist groups in urban poor and rural communities. *With reports from Tina G. Santos, Jerome Aning, Cynthia D. Balana and TJ Burgonio*

Highlights of landmark anti-terror law in Philippines

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE ANTI-terror law:

- Defines terrorism as any of at least 12 violent crimes, including rebellion, kidnapping and murder, that causes widespread and extraordinary fear and panic to force the government to give in to an unlawful demand. Penalty is 40 years in prison without parole.
- Allows court-authorized surveillance of terror suspects, including through wiretaps and tracking devices, but bans monitoring of their communications with lawyers, doctors and journalists.
- Permits detention of terror suspects without charge for three days, which could be extended during actual or imminent attacks. Punishes authorities who torture or allow suspects to escape with up to 20 years' imprisonment.
- Allows house arrest of terror suspects on bail who can be barred from using telephones, the Internet and other means of communications.
- Allows examination and freezing of suspected terrorists' bank accounts and other personal assets.
- Compensates any person by P500,000 (US$10,350; 7,990 euros) in damages for each day of wrongful detention or assets seizure.
- Outlaws groups engaged in terror acts.
- Creates an Anti-Terrorism Council to oversee the counterterrorism fight.
- Bans extraordinary rendition, the CIA practice of arresting foreign terror suspects and sending them to third countries for interrogation.
- Enforcement of law is automatically suspended a month before and two months after any elections.

AP

Revilla leaves DNA samples with NBI in case of paternity claims

From page A1

don't regret anything in my past, I have learned some lessons. I now want to impart these lessons to the future generation. I want to set a good example, and I am doing this now with my children."

Serious talk

He said that he had a serious talk with his son, actor and senator Ramon Jr. ("Bong," by Azucena), who was recently in the news for fathering a child outside his marriage six years ago.

"I told him to stop at that," the older Revilla said. "I told him to think of his wife (Lani Mercado) and their children. I told him to look at [my situation]. I have so many children I have to take care of, send to school. It's not that easy, even for me. I told Bong not to be like me. Having children is a big responsibility."

Revilla said the children he had acknowledged have all been taken care of financially.

"I am also confident that the children who grew up under my wing would also help their younger siblings when I go," he said, referring to his children with wife Azucena, who died in 1998.

Revilla and Azucena had seven children: Marlon, Rowena, Princess, Bong, Strike, Andrea and Diane.

"They are all grownup and on their own," he said. "They are all stable, and they will do what they have to do for the rest."

No amulets

Revilla said he was now preparing to meet his Creator.

"*Naghuhugas na ako ng mga kasalanan* (I am now repenting for my sins)," he said. "I attend Bible lessons every Sunday. I can go anytime. I can't complain. I have nothing else to ask for in this life."

But Revilla is not about to breathe his last, even if he had undergone triple heart bypass surgery in 1999. He also had spinal surgery twice in 2002, after he figured in a car accident.

"I am relatively in good health," he said. "I don't wear eyeglasses, and I can read the smallest print in the newspapers. I am only limping because of an old injury from doing my own stunts for the movies. There's really nothing wrong with me. I am in good shape."

His secret, he said, was not an amulet (*anting-anting*) which, according to urban legend, he has in his possession to protect him from danger.

"I never owned an *anting-anting*," he said. "People think I have one probably because of some of the movies I made, like 'Pepeng Agimat' and 'Nardong Putik.' The secret to my health is not an *anting-anting*, but clean living. I don't drink, I don't smoke. I took care of myself when I was young."

Early life

Revilla is the youngest of 10 children of businessman Ildefonso Bautista and Andrea Acuna. He was pumping gas at a gasoline station when he was discovered for the movies as a bit player. He grew tired of playing small roles and quit to work as a senior intelligence officer with the rank of major in the Bureau of Customs, a job he held for eight years.

Finally, he hit the big-time in motion pictures when he started to write, direct, produce and star in his own movies under Imus Productions, which he set up with Azucena in the 1970s. Playing antihero roles in movies like "Nardong Putik," "Pepeng Agimat," "Tiyagong Akyat, "Cavite Boy," among others, Revilla became the undisputed action star at the box office.

In 1986, he ran for senator, but lost after the Commission on Elections nullified votes for Ramon Revilla, his screen name, which he failed to register with the Comelec, running instead as Jose Bautista, his real name. He finally won in the 1992 senatorial election, landing in second place.

Revilla cited among his landmark bills Republic Act No. 8150, which sought the construction of roads and bridges throughout the Philippines, including the remotest barangays in the country. The bill was signed into law by then President Fidel V. Ramos in September 1995.

But his legacy, he said, was his sponsorship of an amendment to the Family Code, which was enacted into law in February 2004. It provides that "illegitimate children may use the surname of their father if their filiation has been expressly recognized by the father through the record of birth appearing in the civil register, or when an admission in a public document or private handwritten instrument is made by the father."

Birthday wish

"The child should not suffer the stigma of his illegitimacy," Revilla said.

Even if he had finally quit the movies after doing the 2002 film "Agimat ni Lolo," Revilla is not yet done with public service.

After finishing his third term as senator in July of 2004, he asked President Macapagal-Arroyo for a job. He was given the chairmanship of the Philippine Reclamation Authority (Public Estates Authority), a post he still holds today.

"I will continue to serve my country for as long as I'm strong and able," Revilla said. "That is all that I want to do now. I don't even want to celebrate my birthday anymore. If possible, I don't want to have a party. Turning 80 makes me sad because I have outlived some of my friends. This is now the twilight of my life."

He expressed one wish: "For my children to be happy, to live a full life and to be good Filipinos."

Correction

IN THE MARCH 6 issue, a Page A2 story—"Militants file charges vs AFP for poll violation"—misstated the affiliation of Renato Reyes. Reyes is the secretary general of political alliance and umbrella group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or Bayan—not Bayan Muna, a party-list group.

* * *

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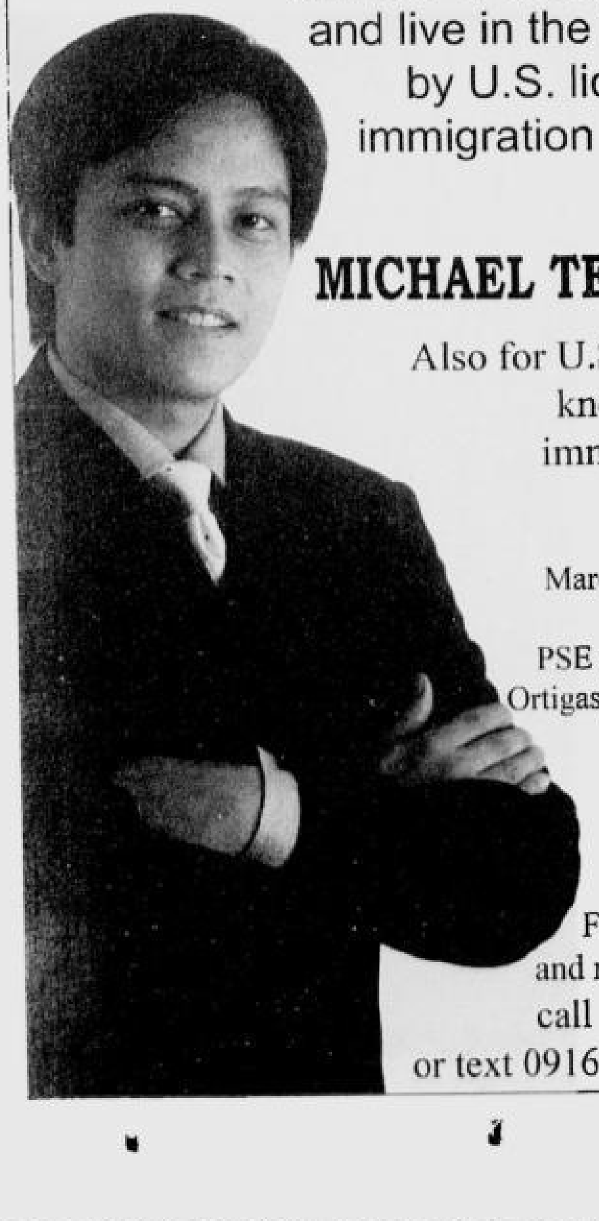

'APOLOGY NOT ENOUGH'

Explain cash raffle, Chavit told

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS WILL ask administration senatorial candidate Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson to explain why he raffled off cash prizes in violation of election laws during a provincial campaign sortie last weekend, a Comelec official said yesterday.

Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez said the poll body would investigate the incident even after Singson apologized for it over the radio.

"His apology doesn't mean that's the end of it. The Comelec will still ask him to explain," Jimenez said.

As of yesterday afternoon, the Comelec commissioners were still discussing the matter, Jimenez said.

Aside from Singson, the organizers of the event that took place in El Salvador, Misamis Oriental, would also be asked to explain, he said.

In a radio interview yesterday, Singson, the governor of Ilocos Sur, said he was unaware it was illegal to give away cash prizes during the election period and apologized for any wrongdoing.

Section 104 of the Omnibus Election Code prohibits the giving of donations or gifts in cash or in kind during the election period.

If found guilty of violating the provision, a candidate could face disqualification as well as one to six years in prison and lose his right of suffrage, Jimenez said.

"The chairman (Benjamin Abalos Sr.) said that ignorance of the law excuses no one," Jimenez said.

He said Abalos and the other commissioners yesterday viewed a tape of the affair, which was brought to the Comelec by a TV reporter.

Singson was seen giving away cash prizes to the winners of a raffle that took place after the administration's Team Unity's "pulong-sulong" (meetings for progress) in El Salvador.

The prizes ranged from P300 to P1,000.

In the radio interview, Singson said he did not organize the raffle and that he even asked why one was being held.

He said the event organizers explained that the audience had come from far-flung areas—implying perhaps that they may have incurred travel expenses—and that he was asked to increase the prizes.

Singson said he agreed because he did not want to be thought of as a "stingy Ilocano."

Jimenez said the commissioners found Singson's explanation amusing and they appreciated the fact that he had admitted his mistake.

Still, Jimenez said, the Comelec would "look into this whole thing and ask everyone involved to explain."

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First Regional Draw	March 31, 2007	April 13, 2007	5 winners of P100,000 each. One (1) winner for each region: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao
Second Regional Draw	April 30, 2007	May 10, 2007	5 winners of P100,000 each. One (1) winner for each region: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao
GRAND DRAW	June 1, 2007	June 13, 2007	4 winners of P100,000 each and 1 grand prize winner of P1.5Million from all entries nationwide.

7. Isang beses lang pwedeng manalo sa bawat draw. Kapag ang entry sender ay nabunot ng dalawang beses o higit pa, makukuha nito ang mas mataas na premyo at muling i-raraffle ang mas mababang premyo.
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        - Voter's ID
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Palace sits on exec's graft cases

From page A1

source familiar with the NPO's transactions with private security printers. He asked not to be named for security reasons.

Genuine Opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano yesterday said Evardone should resign from the NPO "out of *delicadeza* (propriety)."

"It is a sensitive position, especially during election time," Tamano said of Evardone's post, but added that he could not comment on the recommendations for dismissal for lack of first-hand information.

Evardone himself said he had filed for a leave of absence in light of his brother's involvement in the administration campaign.

"I don't want the results of the coming elections compromised," he said.

Leave approved

Evardone also cited *delicadeza* in a March 1 letter to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye where he asked for a leave of absence.

A statement issued yesterday by Bunye's office said the press secretary had approved Evardone's request and designated Marietta de Guzman as officer in charge of the NPO.

"Following the appointment of my brother to a sensitive position in the pro-administration ticket, which the opposition might utilize to question the credibility of the May 14 elections, let me seek your permission to go on official leave of absence effective upon the designation of my replacement until May 15, 2007," Evardone said in the letter quoted in the statement.

"It is a matter of *delicadeza* that I have to make this decision in order not to compromise the results of the elections," he said.

De Guzman is a longtime career officer at the NPO who was, prior to her new posting, the acting chief of the office's Production Planning and Control Division.

In a March 5 letter to Evardone, Bunye said his request for leave was approved effective immediately up to May 15, unless otherwise revoked, amended or suspended.

Bunye designated De Guzman the OIC on the same day, and instructed Evardone to coordinate with her for the "smooth transition and turnover of responsibilities."

All election forms

Evardone said the NPO would be exclusively printing all pertinent forms for the May elections.

"I fought for that. Since 1988, the NPO had only been printing ballots. It has been part of our policy that we will no longer be issuing waivers of our mandate [to print ERs and COCs]," he said.

Evardone said the Commission on Elections respected the NPO's decision to print all election forms at its presses.

"It saw that it is more logical for the election forms to be printed by the NPO, by the government instead of by private printers. As you well know, private printers were involved in allegations of fraud before," he said.

As for the PAGC findings that he had committed graft, Evardone said the complaints were mere harassment suits "filed by printers that I had banned from the NPO for being notoriously undesirable."

"They just have an axe to grind against me," he said. "I'll leave it up to the Office of the President to decide on these cases."

Evardone said the complaints filed against him before the PAGC had also been filed before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"The PAGC is just out to destroy other people's reputations," he said.

PAGC Chair Constancia de Guzman and Commissioners Jaime Jacob and Teresita Baltazar unanimously recommended Evardone's dismissal after finding him liable for graft and violation of procurement laws, as claimed by two printing firms.

The PAGC found merit in the two complaints despite their being filed by two firms barred by the NPO from taking part in any public bidding for contracts with the government printer.

The complaint for graft filed by Bestforms Inc. showed that the NPO under Evardone had revoked the notice of award given to the company for the printing of forms for the Land Transportation Office and awarded the contract to a supposed favored firm.

The company that got the LTO contract was Ready Form, according to the PAGC document.

In its complaint, Bestforms claimed that one of Ready Form's owners had given Evardone a car, and that the favored firm had been recommended to the then LTO chief, Assistant Transportation Secretary Anneli Lontoc.

The PAGC decided on Jan. 26 that the revocation of Bestforms' accreditation had been done with undue haste and that Evardone had favored the company that eventually received the contract for LTO forms.

It found Evardone guilty of violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Law and the Government Procurement Reform Act, and recommended his dismissal to Malacañang.

The Office of the President received the PAGC recommendation to dismiss Evardone on Jan. 30.

Traffic violation receipts

The other case was filed by Eastland Printink Inc.

The firm was declared the winner of the bidding for the printing of traffic violation receipts for Baguio City in May 2006, but was discredited in June of the same year for allegedly making advance deliveries earlier to the NPO in Nueva Ecija.

The complainants said that instead of awarding the contract to the other bidders, the NPO under Evardone conducted another bidding where an alleged favored firm got the contract.

The PAGC on Jan. 31 resolved the case in favor of Eastland, saying that the revocation of its accreditation was without merit.

It found Evardone guilty of graft and violation of the Administrative Code.

ERMITA has yet to sign PAGC's two separate recommendations for dismissal of Felipe Evardone.

The resolution was received by the Office of the President on Feb. 6.

Exasperated

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. sounded exasperated on the phone when asked to comment on the matter.

"I don't know anymore where we have to go," he said. "Before, they wanted the printing done at the NPO. Now that we have the NPO, they're finding fault again."

Abalos said it was beyond the Comelec's control if Evardone happened to be the brother of Team Unity's media director and if Evardone had been recommended for dismissal by the PAGC.

"*Wala tayong magagawa.* What can we do?" he said. "We're dealing with the NPO [as an agency] and not with Mr. Evardone."

Abalos also said the Comelec was ensuring the integrity of the printing of the ballots by allowing representatives of the political parties to observe the printing 24 hours a day.

"[With them there] I don't know how overprinting and smuggling of paper can be done," he said.

According to an earlier statement by Abalos, the paper on which the ballots are printed, as well as the trimmings, are always weighed to ensure that no excess paper was used.

Abalos also stressed that the NPO could not subcontract the printing of the ballots but that it could "engage as many printing machines as needed for as long as these would be brought inside the NPO." *With a report from Nikko Dizon*

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G1	Guangzhou (Canton) 3 - 5 Days	4/04, 4/06
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C1B	Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin 6 - 8 Days	3/29, 4/03
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C4	Southwest China Scenic Tour 6 - 9 Days	3/28, 4/04
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FHH1	Shanghai, Hong Kong 6 Days	4/04, 4/05
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International Nielsen survey: Pinoys most aware of global warming

From page A1

and the Middle East.

The survey found that 94 percent of the 503 respondents from the Philippines had heard or read about global warming.

Only 13 percent of the American respondents said they were aware of global warming.

Seventy-six percent of the Filipinos said they thought global warming was "a very serious problem." It was the highest percentage of those who said so in the Asia Pacific region and the fifth in the world after the Brazilians, the French and the Portuguese.

Moreover, half of the Filipinos polled thought human activities were to blame while 4 percent attributed the problem to natural changes in climate.

Forty-six percent pointed to both human activities and natural factors. One percent said they did not know.

Survey before UN report

The survey was conducted before the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report that said that man was very likely causing global warming.

The report, which was released last month, said that man-made emissions of greenhouse gases could be blamed for the hotter nights, fewer cold days, killer heat waves, floods and heavy rains, devastating droughts and the increase in the intensity of tropical storms.

Global warming will be unstoppable for centuries to come, said the IPCC.

Gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere when fossil fuels like coal, wood and gas for energy are burned.

These gases act like the glass roof of a greenhouse and trap solar heat underneath, thus the term "greenhouse gases."

Farquhar Stirling, AC-Nielsen managing director for Southeast Asia, said in the report that unprecedented warm winters, prolonged summers, rainstorms at an unexpected time of the year were drawing global attention to climate change like never before.

Very serious problem

On the average, 9 out of every 10 of the world's online population were aware of the issue, and over half (57 percent) considered it "a very serious problem."

"The 2004 Kyoto Protocol made some tentative steps toward controlling the greenhouse gasses that are thought to contribute to global warming, but three key countries—the United States, the world's biggest economy, and emerging giants China and India—have yet to ratify the treaty," Stirling said.

"What's worrying is that while there is a high level of awareness among consumers globally, the level of concern toward global warming remains low," he said.

Stirling said that the high awareness levels reflected the increasing media coverage of global warming particularly since the November 2006, Nairobi Climate Change Conference.

The Czechs led the world in awareness of global warming with 99 percent of online consumers saying so, followed by the mainland Chinese, Portuguese, Russians and Thais—all at 98 percent.

Those least aware were from the United Arab Emirates (16 percent) who said they had never heard of global warming.

Only 11 percent of Malaysians were aware of global warming.

Worldwide, 57 percent of those polled felt that global warming was a very serious problem. Thirty-four percent saw it as "fairly serious."

Low level of concern

"Despite high awareness among global consumers and the majority considering it a serious problem, global warming is not considered a major personal concern in (the) short term," Stirling said.

But global warming has become more than just an environmental issue as businesses become increasingly exposed to risks and potential disruptions due to climate change, he said.

"Judging by the low levels of concern among people surveyed, it remains something too far off for them," he said.

The poll also covered Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania;

Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Vietnam. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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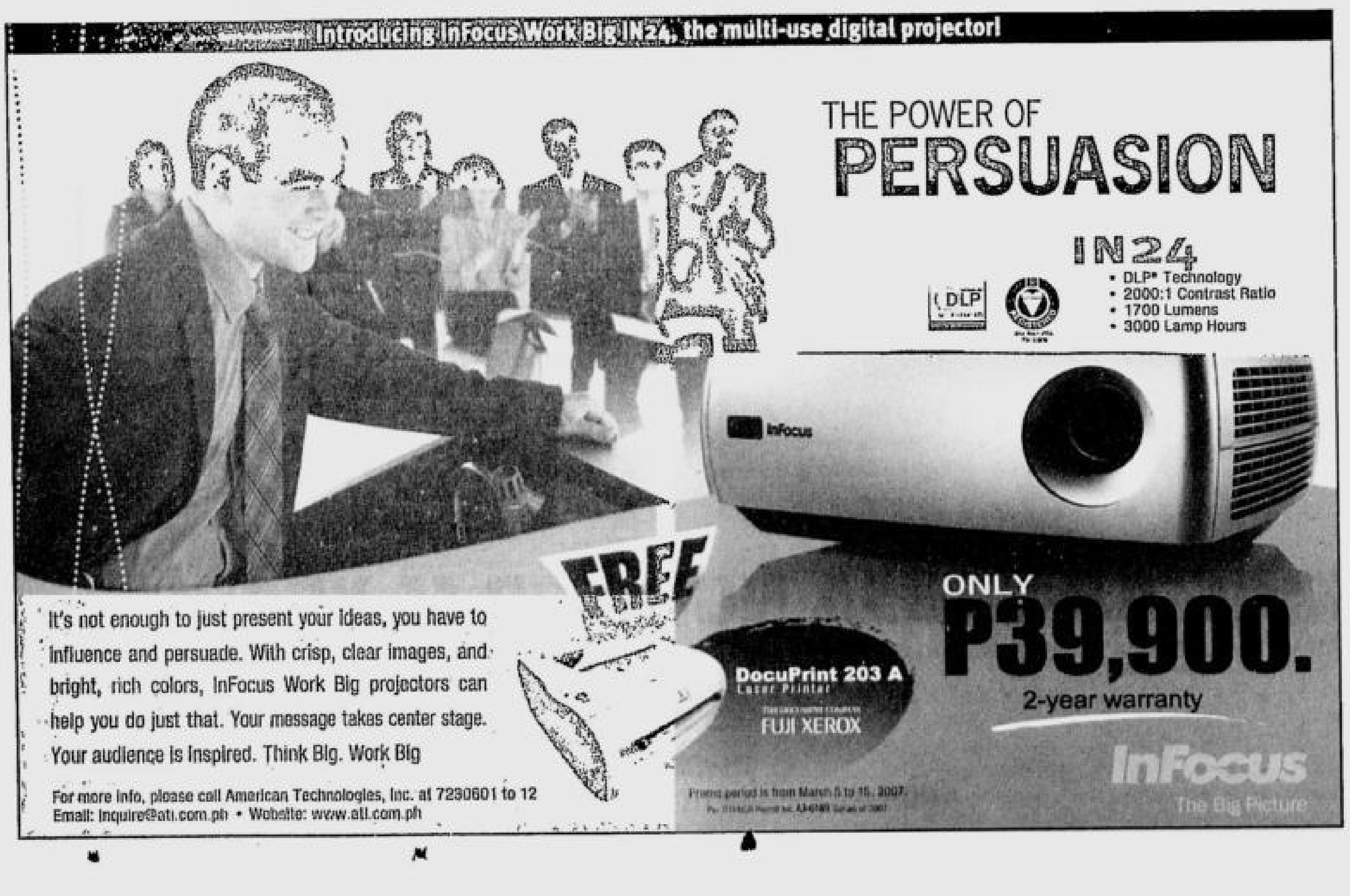

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InFocus The Big Picture

Comelec says voters' info just a text message away

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) IS SET to introduce a "voters' info-text service," as part of the election body's effort to encourage the electorate to take a more active role in the coming elections.

Recognizing the ubiquity of cellular phones in the country, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said in a press statement that the new Comelec service will bring "immense benefit to the electorate."

"Essential election information such as the national, local and party-list candidates, and official election results may be just a text message away with this service," Abalos said.

Through Comelec's info-text service, which will be available nationwide, the public can report to the Comelec electoral fraud and anomalies, complaints and other concerns.

Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez added that voters could even ask for their precinct numbers as soon as the Comelec comes out with a final list of registered voters for the May 14 mid-term elections.

A unified number for the text-info service will be announced later, Jimenez said.

Yesterday, Abalos signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Eric Ylagan, the president of content provider, Confiance Inc.

According to the company profile furnished to the media by Comelec, Confiance is a technology company specializing in SMS-based content and applications that was established in 2003.

Confiance has "developed and deployed mobile-based value-added services for government, companies, schools and other organized groups giving them the ability to take advantage of mobile technology to reach each organization's set objectives."

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Recto: More gov't lawyers, less backlog in courts

REELECTIONIST SEN. Ralph Recto yesterday called for the hiring of more public attorneys to speed up court cases and to unclog jails.

Recto said that on the average, one public attorney served 4,310 clients in 2005, a fact which contributes to a backlog in court cases.

He said the 1,016 underpaid and undermanned lawyers of the Public Attorney's Office served 4,379,850, mostly poor clients and grappled with 588,442 judicial and quasi-judicial cases during the same period.

"In short, one PAO lawyer handles an average of 580 cases which is too much by any standard," Recto said.

A report of the PAO to Congress showed that lawyers of the Justice department-attached agency handled 477,334 criminal cases and 57,416 criminals cases last year.

In addition to this heavy case load, PAO lawyers have to assist poor litigants in administrative cases, labor cases, and client counseling, the latter involving 1,078,651 persons in 2005.

A PAO lawyer is assigned to two to three courts, the PAO report said.

Recto said the work of public attorneys is not confined to salas alone but extended to jails and prisons.

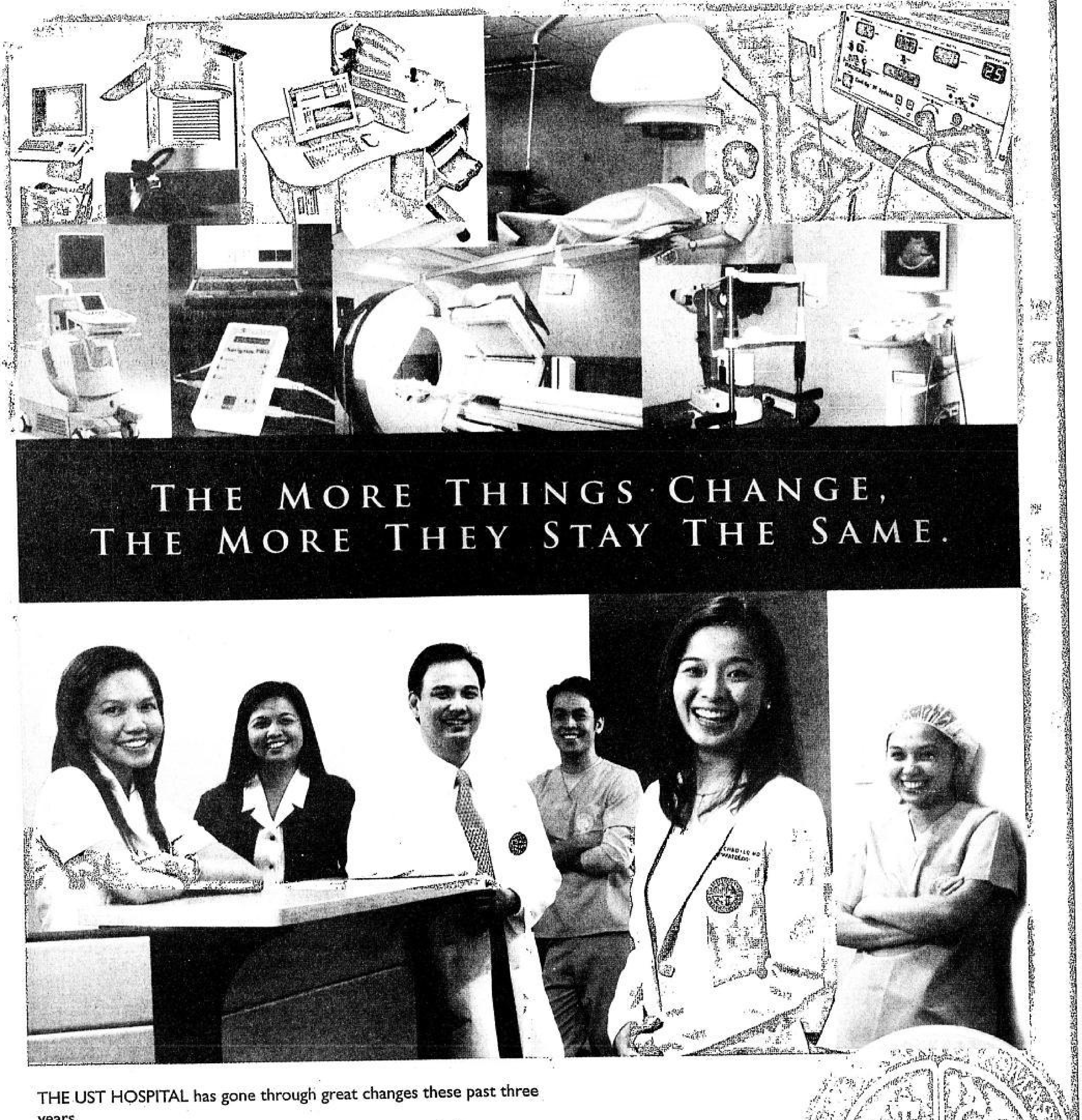
He said that public attorneys assisted more than 220,000 persons behind bars in 2005.

"With most PAO lawyers not netting P20,000 a month in pay, their increase in compensation must be a priority concern when the government hikes the pay of its employees through the planned Salary Standardization Law III," the senator said.

Recto said the "official turnaround" should result in the granting of special allowances to PAO lawyers "to prevent the fast turnover of PAO lawyers and their mass migration to lucrative private practice."

Recto said the amount allocated for books and periodicals, which are needed in any legal practice, for the whole PAO was a measly P400,000 in 2005.

Cynthia D. Balana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Batangas bishop talks like a 'true Vilmanian'

From page A1

honesty, humility, a loving and caring personality, a clean record in public service and, of course, competence.

This explains the overwhelming clamor among Batangas folk for her to run for governor, Arguelles said.

The actress-turned-politician at first said she would give way to her brother-in-law, Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, who also wanted to run for governor, but later she said she was giving serious thought to making a run herself and would announce her decision in a few days.

"People are really looking for change," Arguelles said in a telephone interview. "They see Vilma as a very sincere and honest leader, someone who's really out to serve the people. That's why she is respected. Not to mention that she was able to achieve so many things."

Careful not to sound like a campaign manager, the archbishop said he was neither rooting for Santos nor campaigning against other politicians aspiring to be governor.

"I'm not pro-Vilma," he said in Filipino. "It's just that among the aspirants, it appears that she best embodies the qualities that the people are looking for in the next governor."

Arguelles, who heads one of the most prominent archdioceses in the country, said the people should have no difficulty throwing their support behind reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez or Recto, if only the two would "renounce their bad ways."

He did not elaborate on what these were.

Sanchez, a member of the administration coalition, has been linked to the illegal numbers game "jueteng" but has strongly denied the allegation.

Recto is the elder brother of Santos' husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto.

All but confirmed

Santos served notice she might run for governor after some 3,000 supporters trooped to the Lipa City Hall on Monday to appeal to her to join the gubernatorial race.

She said she would make her decision not as a wife, a mother or an actress but as a leader of her people—all but confirming that she was about to take the leap, a decision that would put her in direct confrontation with her brother-in-law.

Santos also said running for governor would be like going to war.

Arguelles recalled one instance when Santos sought his guidance amid calls for her to run for Batangas' top post.

Crime syndicates

"She was wary that she might not be able to go up against the different crime syndicates in the province," the archbishop said. "But I told her that she didn't have to fight them. She just had to show that none of the vices was with her, that she needed only to show clean, noble and honest leadership."

Arguelles said Santos' style of leadership was also appealing to the people.

"She always says that she can't do anything without the support of the people," he said. "I look forward to this kind of leadership, to a leader who doesn't present himself as a Superman, but someone who simply finds himself at the forefront and considers his people as his collaborators."

Arguelles said the idea of leadership by example was needed in Batangas, where drug trafficking and gambling were said to be the scourge.

Palace help not necessary

"If the leader is a thief then only the thieves are happy," he said. "But if the leader is honest, sincere and dedicated, people will be happy and will be challenged to be the same. We need leaders with a sincere desire to serve the people, not demagogues and Hitlers."

Senator Recto insinuated yesterday that his wife could win even without Malacañang's backing.

"If you add all the votes of the potential candidates, times two (or) times three, that will not even possibly equal the votes Vilma may get in an election," Recto said in an interview at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel in Manila. "This why they are afraid of Vilma running."

"If Vilma will run, we don't care if this will be as an opposition or administration candidate," Recto said, when asked about his wife running against Sanchez who, under the equity of the incumbent rule would, at least theoretically, be President Macapagal-Arroyo's candidate in the province.

Batangueños will decide

Recto said that the President's party Kampi, to which Sanchez switched over yesterday, "is a formidable party but it is not enough."

"It is not the Palace which will choose who will be next Batangas governor but the Batangas electorate regardless of what party you are," Recto said.

He said his brother, Ricky, and Sanchez "can say whatever they want but the election is about who has the most votes."

Recto said his wife would run under the name "Vilma Santos."

Feud is temporary

"She has her own legacy, people knew her even before they heard of me. I have to respect that and I am very proud of my wife," said Recto.

Recto said the reported family feud over who would run for governor between his wife and his brother was only "temporary" and that he hoped that this would be resolved after the elections.

"This is not about the family. This is about who can serve the province better. I'm sure we will resolve it and the family will come out stronger," said Recto. "I'll just pray for him (his brother)." *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Lakas-CMD backs Vi; Kampi for Sanchez

From page A1

"I'm only talking as head of Lakas (in Southern Tagalog). Yes, if she will run," said Ermita.

Sanchez joins Kampi

Told that Santos had said that she would base her decision on the sentiments of her constituents, Ermita appeared elated, saying: "That's good. Then I hope she (runs). That's it."

Sanchez and 15 other mayors in Batangas yesterday took their oath as Kampi members, leaving the Liberal Party wing of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, a supporter of Ms Arroyo.

Sanchez cited the legal issue hounding the party, which is split into two factions. One is headed by Sen. Franklin Drilon. The issue is still pending before the Supreme Court.

Sanchez is hoping to get the endorsement of Ms Arroyo as he seeks reelection, especially now that he is an official member of Kampi.

Kampi (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino) was founded in 1996 for Ms Arroyo's presidential bid in 1998. She instead opted to be the running mate of Jose de Venecia, the presidential candidate of Lakas in 1998.

Arbitration

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, who was unanimously elected Kampi chair yesterday, said that should Santos decide to run, the face-off between two administration allies in Batangas would be brought to the arbitration committee.

"The President will probably leave it to the committee," Puno said.

The committee settles rows between Kampi and Lakas candidates.

The committee includes Speaker Jose de Venecia of Lakas, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, the new Kampi president; Rizal Rep. Jack Duavit of the Nationalist People's Coalition and Atienza.

Exaggerated

De Venecia, the head of Lakas-CMD, said the conflict between Lakas and Kampi was being "exaggerated" by some quarters.

As President, Ms Arroyo also serves as titular head of Lakas, being the largest party in the administration coalition.

Lakas was the party formed to support the presidential candidacy of Fidel V. Ramos in 1992 after he failed to get the endorsement of the then dominant Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

Although there are many administration bailiwicks becoming "conflict areas" because two or more allies are contesting the same post, the coalition can still resolve the squabbles, according to De Venecia.

"We have agreed on the equity of the incumbent and agreed to mobilize mutual resources to ensure the victory of our local, congressional and senatorial candidates," he said.

De Venecia said Kampi didn't have the motive or the political muscle to challenge Lakas' dominance at this point.

"I don't think so," De Venecia said, stressing that Kampi, led by Puno and Villafuerte, was not out to wrest the speakership from him.

However, De Venecia said that "history can change in one week."

Puno and speakership?

Puno is said to be planning to run for Congress and challenge De Venecia for the speakership. But yesterday, Puno said he would decide in the next two weeks if he would run.

But just in case, he said, Kampi would have the numbers in the next Congress. He told reporters Kampi had almost the same number of congressmen as Lakas.

Puno later said in a speech at the party national convention at the Manila Hotel that Kampi was only saying it had 62 members in Congress. "But we are lying," he said to loud applause from the audience.

"I am confident that Kampi will have a very large membership in the next Congress. We will be a major party in the coming elections," Puno told the INQUIRER.

De Venecia doesn't expect Villafuerte to challenge him in the House of Representatives because, he said, "we're friends."

Deputy Speaker for Luzon Eric Singson said De Venecia had the backing of the "Solid North" bloc, which has 29 members in the House.

Easily, Singson said, De Venecia could count on the votes of about 140 to 150 members of the House in July, when the 14th Congress opens.

"Not with this election. Kampi can challenge us maybe in 2010," Singson said.

Biggest political party

De Venecia said Lakas was maintaining its tight grip on power, with 52 percent of all governors, or more than 40 of the 80 provinces, dominated by the ruling party.

The rest of the provinces are divided among six political parties allied with Malacañang, he said.

Speaking to the media, leaders of Kampi said their coalition with Lakas remained solid and harmonious.

But they told party members that their goal was to be become the biggest political party after the elections.

Puno told the Kampi national convention that the party "is going to be the biggest political party in this country."

Singson said that "based on the things that I'm seeing, most of the reelectionist candidates in the local level are still with Lakas."

He explained that the infighting was caused primarily by administration allies who were not seeking reelection, and thus could not avail themselves of the principle of the equity of the incumbent.

"They can't go to the opposition, so (Kampi) accommodates them" said Singson, stressing that the erstwhile Lakas members were just "taking shelter in other administration parties."

Singson said the rift was to be expected in an "off-presidential election."

"We won't have serious brawls this time around. Not now," he said.

Sought to comment on the perceived rift between the two ruling parties, Villafuerte said it was not true.

Free zones allowed

"In fact, we are strengthening the unity of the two groups through the arbitration committee process," Villafuerte told the INQUIRER.

He said that in very few cases, "free zones will be allowed." They would release the results of the arbitration today.

Speaking during the convention, however, Villafuerte told his party mates that Kampi "(has) grown tremendously (and) we will be ready to do battle with anyone."

Puno told reporters the perceived conflict between Kampi and Lakas could be attributed to the weakness of the opposition.

"The focus is on Kampi and Lakas because the opposition does not have candidates in the local level," Puno also said. He said local politicians were running with either Kampi or Lakas.

'Grown 5-fold'

Refusing to give the exact number, Villafuerte said Kampi had grown "five-fold."

Puno said that of the 1,560 town mayors in the country, about 600 were members of Kampi.

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They went all the way to US to learn what 'final' means

From page A1

finding team, led by its chief executive officer Dr. Barbara Nichols, to the Philippines last September.

"The key question was not what Philippine authorities did, but what US authorities would have done in similar circumstances," the CGFNS said.

"CGFNS determined that in the case of the June 2006 Philippine license examination, the compromise situation was handled in a way that was not comparable to the way it had been handled in the US," the CGFNS also said.

Of the 17,000 who passed the controversial test, at least 10,000 are expected to voluntarily retake the exam in June or December.

Hoping against hope

The Philippine team was headed by Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella and included Professional Regulation Commission chair Leonor Rosero, former president of the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing Dr. Remigia Nathanielz, and Aquino.

They met with Nichols, CGFNS Board of Trustees president Dr. Lucille Joel and counsel John Ratigan.

Before leaving for the United States, Rosero had said the Philippine team would explain to the CGFNS how the government addressed the leakage problem, hoping the CGFNS would reconsider its decision.

The members of the team are expected to be back on Friday.

Early preparations

Even before yesterday's final blow, officials were already preparing to implement a voluntary retake for the affected nurses.

Such an option loomed after the CGFNS said as early as three weeks ago that the 2006 passers needed to again take the exam.

It reiterated that statement days later after learning about the Philippines' plan to send a delegation to Philadelphia. In that statement, CGFNS already made it clear that there would be no use for the delegation to come to the United States.

The preparations were halted when Ms Arroyo created the appeal team headed by Puentevella despite statements from other officials that such a move would merely give the nurses "false hopes."

Asked for comment on the newest CGFNS statement, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the matter was now up to the individual nurse.

"If they want to go to the US, they have to retake the exam. Otherwise, they should work elsewhere," he said. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Magdalo officer to plead guilty

By DJ Yap

A JUNIOR OFFICER being tried for the failed 2003 coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny, said he would plead guilty to conspiracy to commit coup d'etat in a move that lawyers said had little impact on the case but could influence it.

1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan told a Makati court yesterday that he wanted to plead guilty to conspiracy, a lesser offense than the coup d'etat charge he is facing with 30 other soldiers.

Conspiracy to commit coup d'etat carries a jail term of 6 to 12 years, while coup d'etat is punishable by life imprisonment.

San Juan previously entered a not-guilty plea to the coup d'etat charge.

His turnaround took the other defendants by surprise which led to a testy exchange after the hearing between San Juan and Lt. Antonio Trillanes, one of the alleged coup leaders who is now seeking a Senate seat in the opposition slate.

Plea change

Lawyer Paolo Primavera told the court that San Juan intends to change his plea once he gets the consent of the prosecution, as required by law.

"The judge will have to resolve first whether to grant the motion to change the plea. So at this stage, I cannot discuss the grounds," Primavera said. But he stressed that San Juan's action was "very voluntary."

Lawyers for the other defendants said San Juan's turnaround would not directly affect their clients but could somehow influence the case.

"There is no direct implication, but it may involve the testimonies of the others, since, of course, he'll be admitting to a conspiracy [with other people]," said lawyer Theodore Te.

'My decision'

After the hearing, Trillanes approached San Juan inside the courtroom and took him aside. "Think of the others who will be affected," he told San Juan, who replied: "This is my decision. You make your own decisions."

"You're not thinking of others," Trillanes said.

To which San Juan replied: "I am thinking of them. *Huwag kang bastos* (Don't be rude). Is that how a senator should act?"

Barred from giving interviews, Trillanes tried to make the most of the media's presence, spending much of the time in court exchanging notes with the media.

The journalists passed the notes around in what amounted to a silent impromptu press conference.

"Low-tech text messaging," was how a reporter described it.

Trillanes has a pending motion before the Makati court seeking increased access to the media.

But his lawyer Reynaldo Robles said the campaign was going well.

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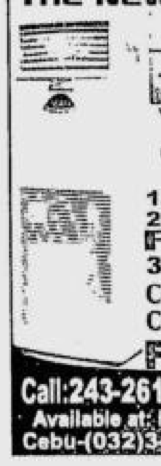

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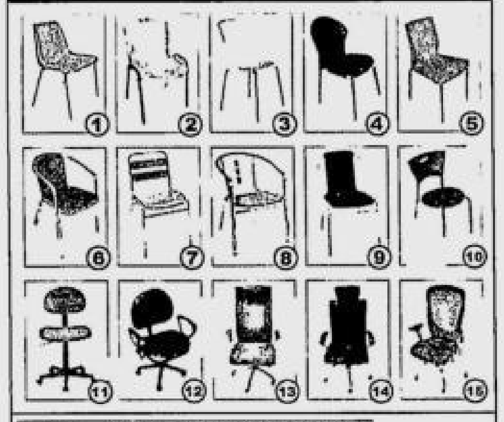

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GMA leaves Unity fate to local execs

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WHILE TAKING A MORE LOW-key stance in the senatorial campaign, President Macapagal-Arroyo is not leaving the fate of her 12 senatorial candidates to chance.

Yesterday, Ms Arroyo exhorted local officials to ensure the victory of Team Unity on her behalf.

"*Ipapaubaya ko na sa inyo ang ating* Team Unity, *kayo na lang ang bahala sa kanila* (I entrust to you our Team Unity. Take care of them)," Ms Arroyo said in her speech at the 15th annual convention of the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines in a hotel in Pasay City.

The President said she would focus on the "national agenda" of creating more jobs and enterprises, keeping peace and order and promoting a green Philippines, components of her new mantra "8 by '08" or securing eight goals by 2008. She also appealed to the local officials to continue their support for her administration.

"It is election time once again and we hope that the elections in May will focus on a prosperous future and not on old complaints," Ms Arroyo said.

The President is still hounded by accusations she stole the 2004 elections, the still unresolved "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal and her alleged use of the P725 million fertilizer fund to ensure her victory in the 2004 polls.

Endorsement

At the convention, the President endorsed some of the Team Unity candidates who showed up, including Senators Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto and Edgardo Angara, Governors Luis "Chavit" Singson and Vic Magsaysay, Vicente "Tito" Sotto III and Sultan of Sulu Jamalul Kiram III.

As the President made her pitch for her candidates, she assured the local officials of the release of billions of pesos worth of Internal Revenue Allotment for local government units.

"Part of our social payback of our efficient fiscal management and good fiscal reforms is the P15 billion additional IRA intended for all LGUs," she said to the loud applause of the local officials.

The President reminded the board members that 40 percent of the government revenues from the expanded Vaue Added Tax accrues to their IRA which are automatically appropriated.

Ms Arroyo said that since she became President in 2001, the IRA has been automatically appropriated whether or not a new budget has been passed by Congress. "This amount is given to you even if we don't have a (new) budget," Ms Arroyo said.

While she has not been actively campaigning for her candidates in their sorties, Ms Arroyo has been mobilizing local officials to support them.

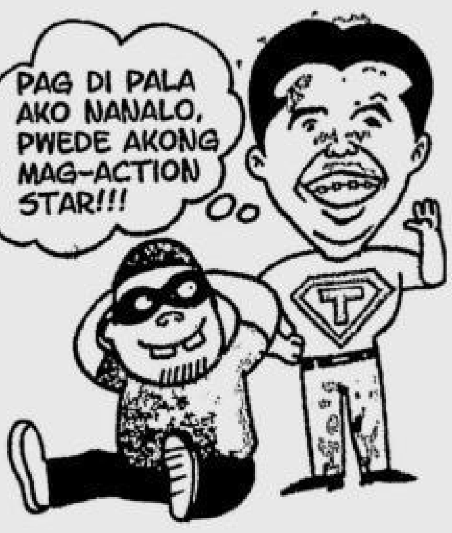
On Monday night, the President hosted a dinner for the League of Cities of the Philippines led by Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Trenas in Malacañang. She will be hosting another dinner for the League of Provinces tonight.

Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio admitted that Team Unity candidates have been "notified" about the dinner meetings with local officials.

A number of them showed up during the Monday dinner, during the PBMLP affair yesterday and are expected to attend similar dinners next week.

Claudio said the President enlists the support of the local officials during what he described to be "bonding sessions" with Ms Arroyo.

"There's nothing wrong with that. In fact it's not normal for the President not to make a pitch for the candidates of the administration," Claudio said.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'This is a job for Super 'Tol'

By DJ Yap and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! NO, IT'S "SUPER 'TOL."

Senatorial candidate Michael Defensor became an accidental hero yesterday when he and his bodyguards helped stop a crime in progress by joining a high-speed car chase of suspected car thieves from Mandaluyong to Makati.

"He was okay. *Para talagang* [like a real] 'Super 'Tol,'" said Supt. Gilbert Cruz, the Makati police chief, referring to Defensor's campaign moniker.

Defensor was on his way to the Century Park Sheraton hotel in Manila to attend a Team Unity meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo when he spotted a "wayward" Nissan sedan with its hood open speeding on Calbayog St., Libertad, Mandaluyong at about 12:30 p.m.

"The car was already being chased by the Mandaluyong traffic enforcers when Secretary Defensor saw it and joined the chase," said Cruz.

The Sentra sped past Defensor's Nissan Patrol, hitting two tricycles with children on board, Cruz said. Two cars were also hit as the suspects weaved about, police said. The names of those injured were not immediately available.

When the suspects reached the Mantrade area in Makati, they turned into a one-way street and were trapped when their car collided with a taxi, Cruz said.

"They got off and fled in different directions. The traffic enforcers, Defensor, his bodyguards, and the police all helped to round up the suspects," he said.

Arrested were Romar Mendoza, 25, Francis Mendoza, 25, Mark Anthony Cruz, and a 17-year-old boy. The fifth suspect, Renato Cortez, who was the driver, escaped, police said.

The car was stolen between 12 midnight and 4 a.m. from the residence of Eric Evangelista on Binakod Street in Makati. It was already stripped of certain parts, like the stereo, when it was recovered, Cruz said.

"We believe the suspects belong to a syndicate that chops up cars and sells the parts," he said.

In a phone interview, Defensor said he felt a "rush" when he got out of his black Nissan Patrol to give chase to one of the suspects.

"There were four of them and they went in different directions. I just couldn't let them get away," he said.

Defensor said he saw the Nissan Sentra crossing the southbound Edsa-Shaw interchange with its front hood up and being chased by a motorcycle policeman.

"I knew there was something wrong so we joined the police chase," he said.

He said at one point he and his aides were the only ones pursuing the suspects when the police got blocked at the South Superhighway.

Defensor said he pulled one of the suspects to the ground.

As it turned out, his quarry worked as a utility man for the administration in the 2004 presidential campaign.

Defensor said he lent his phone to the suspect so he could make a call to his wife.

Election Forum to meet today for clean, honest polls

OVER 200 SOCIOCIVIC AND BUSINESS ORGAnizations are expected to participate in the Philippine Election Forum (PEF) plenary meeting today to finalize an action plan for honest, orderly, peaceful, credible and democratic elections in May.

The PEF was convened by the Commission on Elections (Comelec), Department of Education (DepEd), Far East Broadcasting Co. (FEBC), National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

The mid-morning conference at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City will deliberate on proposed resolutions drafted at PEF cluster meetings last March 1.

"With major sectors and citizens groups lining up behind its action plan, the forum is a milestone in the nation's quest for honest, orderly and peaceful elections," said PEF convenor and Namfrel founding chairman Jose Concepcion Jr.

Among the proposals to be tackled in the PEF plenary are:

- The posting of lists of voters and their precincts in barangay halls and parish churches at least a week before the polls to avoid the widespread voter confusion of 2004;
- Appointment of a seventh Comelec commissioner to speed up the resolution of election disputes.

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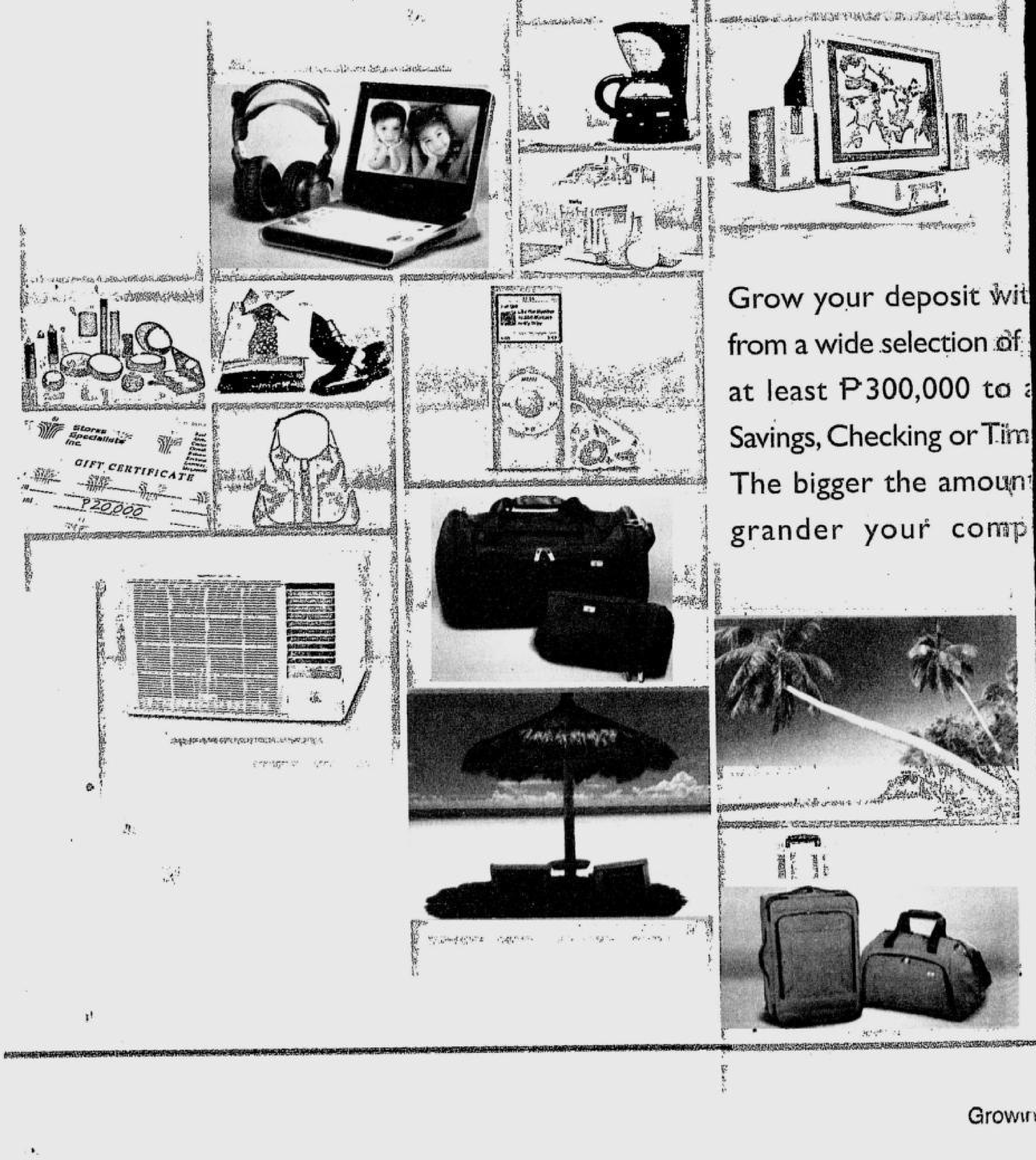

Negros farmers to get land this week

By TJ Burgonio

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM announced it is finally installing 122 land reform beneficiaries in a contested sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental this week, but is keeping the date secret to preempt any plan by residents loyal to the former landlord to block it.

The announcement comes two weeks after the farmer-beneficiaries began a hunger strike outside the gates of the DAR headquarters in Quezon City.

"For security reasons, the date will not be divulged. This way we can install them peacefully," agrarian reform secretary Nasser Pangandaman, who has come under fire for stalling on this issue, said yesterday in an interview.

Pangandaman said officials from the DAR, police, military and La Castellana town reached this consensus when they met Monday in Iloilo to iron out the details of the farmers' installation inside the 144-hectare property in Hacienda Velez-Malaga, formerly owned by Robert Cuenca.

"We will just go there," Pangandaman said.

The DAR has asked policemen and soldiers to secure the area when Pangandaman and other officials finally escort the farmers inside the hacienda to avert any violence. It has also requested the police to set up a precinct in the area to keep law and order after the installation.

Of the 122 beneficiaries, 102 belong to the Task Force Mapalad (TFM), which is leading the hunger strike outside the DAR headquarters in Quezon City to protest DAR's failure to install them in the hacienda despite a certificate of land ownership award (CLOA) in 2002.

The rest of the beneficiaries are loyal to Cuenca and have reportedly threatened to block the installation of TFM farmers.

"We'll do our job. The PNP and the military will do their jobs," Pangandaman said, when asked if the policemen and soldiers were prepared to tackle any violent resistance to the installation.

Some of the 22 beneficiaries now on hunger strike outside the DAR office in Quezon City welcomed the announced installation, but the others were still skeptical. All of them vowed to press ahead with the hunger strike until all the beneficiaries were brought to their landholding inside the hacienda, and assured they would be secured from any harassment.

"We will not go home until they put up a detachment," said Adelaida Santillan, 57, one of the protesting beneficiaries whose brother-in-law Pepito Santillan was killed allegedly by Cuenca's security men in late January.

The 22 beneficiaries began camping outside the DAR office on Feb. 20 and went on hunger strike the next day to protest Pangandaman's failure to install them as rightful owners in the plantation a number of times beginning late last year.

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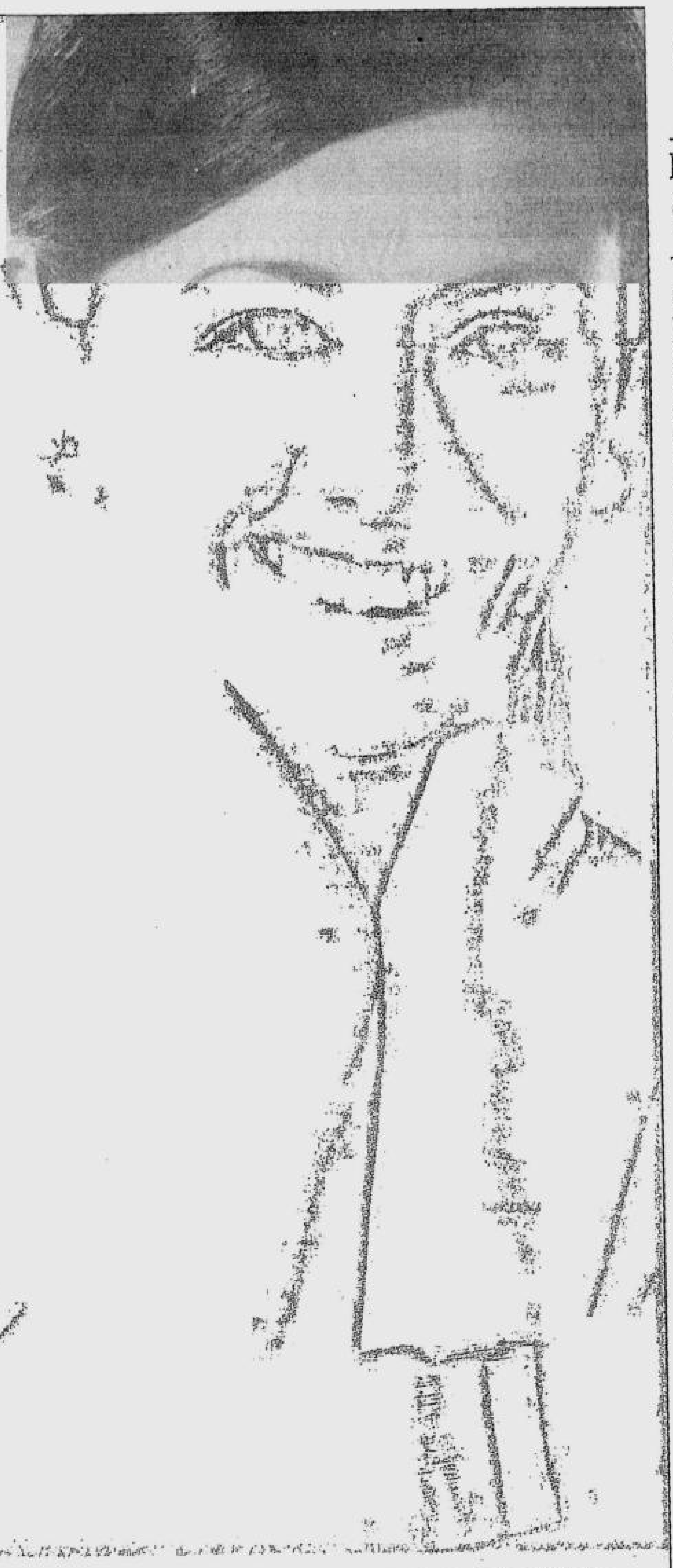

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OPINION

Justice derailed

EDITORIAL

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO S. PUNO CLEARLY believes that justice delayed is justice denied. Now he wants to disprove a sinister rule of thumb: that when the guns speak, the law falls silent.

In January, the Chief Justice was the first high official to take a stand against the epidemic of extrajudicial killings, without attempting any rationalizations or engaging in mental reservations. President Macapagal-Arroyo then tried to reclaim the high ground by saying there should be special courts to try cases of extrajudicial killings. But, to repeat, it was Puno, after meeting with Philip Alston, the special rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council, who firmly placed the issue in the proper perspective: political killings are taking place and those responsible for them must be punished, with particular attention to agents of the state. "The extrajudicial taking of life is the ultimate violation of human rights," Puno said. "It cannot be allowed anywhere, and it has to be resisted everywhere. Extrajudicial killings also constitute brazen assaults on the rule of law."

The Supreme Court has said in Administrative Order 25-2007, "The speedy and expeditious resolution of these criminal cases deserves the highest concern by the judiciary, involving, as they do, the most brazen violations of human rights." The order, signed by the Chief Justice and Associate Justices Leonardo Quisumbing and Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, designates 99 regional trial courts (basically all single-sala courts) as special tribunals. It also directs the lower courts to hold "mandatory continuous trial [that] shall be terminated within 60 days" from commencement, with "judgment [to] be rendered within 30 days from submission for decision unless a shorter period is provided by law or otherwise directed by this Court." Where trials of extrajudicial and media killings have already begun, the regional trial courts to which these have been assigned are to continue their proceedings, but follow the time period prescribed. Furthermore, the special courts must submit a status report on every 10th day of the succeeding month or the salaries and allowances will be withheld and administrative sanctions will be imposed.

The special courts have been directed to give priority to cases of activists and media personnel. This is in keeping with the Melo Commission's findings that extrajudicial killings of political activists and media practitioners have taken place, and that circumstances point to a high proportion of these crimes having been committed by government agents. As the Supreme Court put it, in determining a "political killing," what has to be considered are "the political affiliation of the victim, the method of attack and the involvement of state agents."

The net effect of the order is precisely to prove that guns and grenades cannot force the law to fall silent. It is a ringing endorsement of the rule of law and the accountability of public officials.

The result has been predictable. Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye said, "President Arroyo appreciates the quick action of the Supreme Court in creating the special courts to try unexplained killings."

But the problem with this presidential appreciation is that it sidesteps the existence of the killings and the culpability of military men, to the extent that it requires a kind of judicial policy declaration of a crisis demanding relief from the courts. It also fails to address the issue directly.

The special courts will be useless if cases aren't filed, and if the prosecutorial arm of the Department of Justice isn't mobilized to pursue the cases. The hostility Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez directs at any party clamoring for an investigation, a hostility he shares with the top brass of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the obvious reluctance of the national police to investigate such cases, mean the cases will be few, the prosecution will be lacking in energy and resources, and the objectives of the Court will be sabotaged by foot-dragging on the part of the executive branch.

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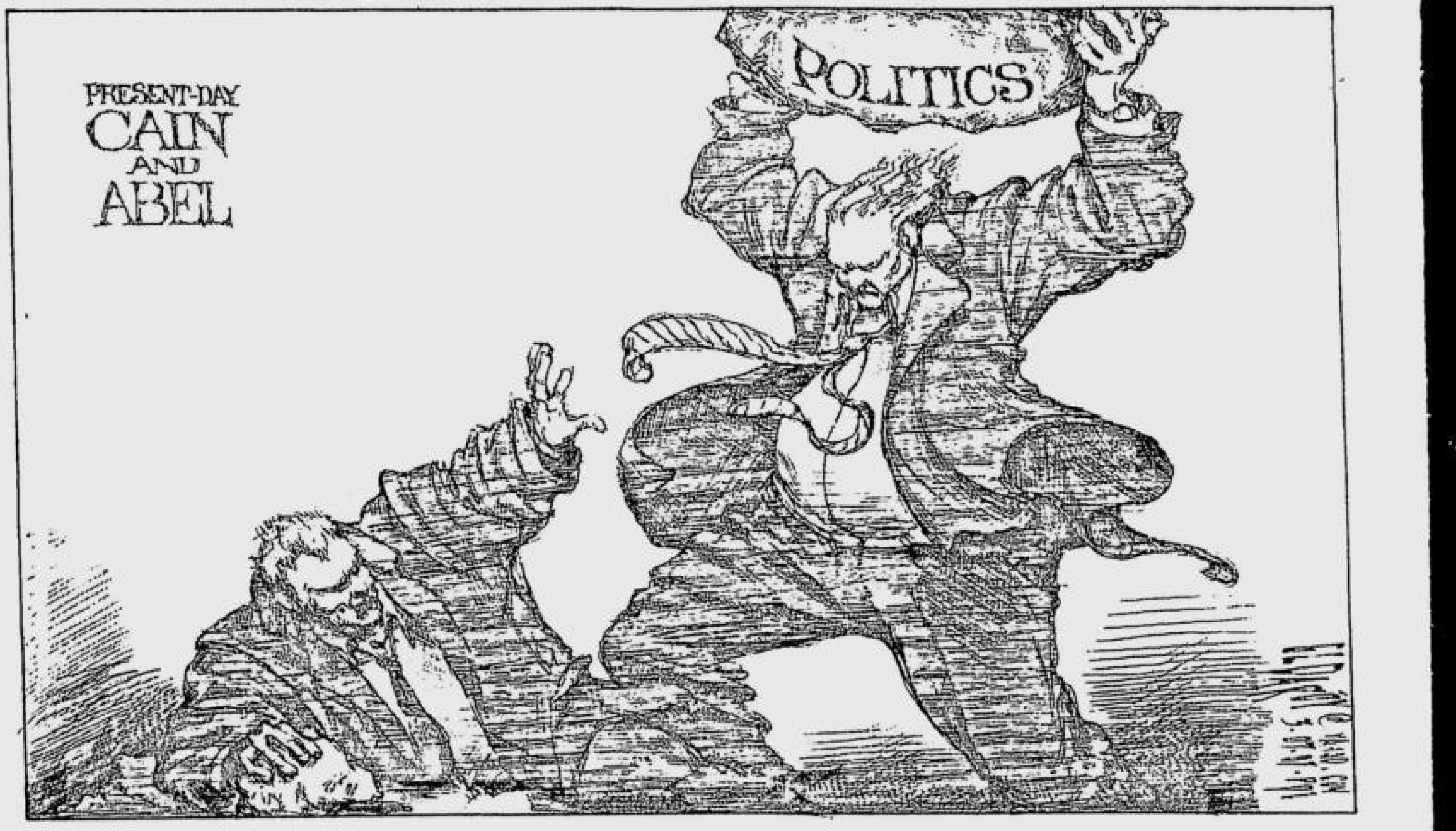


Wrong decisions, wrong moves of opposition

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

AT THIS POINT IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, the opposition senatorial candidates are still ahead of their rivals in the administration, as borne out by opinion polls. But at the rate the opposition campaign is unraveling, the administration candidates may catch up and nose ahead before election day.

What's happening to the opposition? It started way ahead of the administration. Fully 80 percent of the population is against the administration. Candidates lined up to be included in the opposition senatorial ticket while administration politicians shied away from its official slate. The opposition's problem was how to pare the list of candidates while the administration's problem was how to fill up its ticket. The surveys put at least eight of the opposition candidates in the winning column; only two from the administration and two independents. But with such an advantage, the opposition campaign quickly lost steam. The campaign train had barely started to roll when it came to a stop. One of its guest candidates refused to join its proclamation rally. Sites and dates of rallies kept changing. Some rallies were cancelled. Candidates were campaigning solo instead of in big groups. What's wrong?

I think the first big mistake was choosing San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, President Joseph Estrada's son, as the national campaign manager. (He has been replaced by Sen. Serge Osmeña.) JV is a competent mayor, but he is too young and inexperienced to direct the national campaign of 12 senatorial candidates. He still doesn't have sufficient prestige to be able to tell much older and experienced politicians to do this or do that.

And JV's first mistake was to blab that the opposition has no campaign money, that donations are not coming in, and that donors are afraid to contribute because it is scared of retaliation from the administration. That is probably true and JV probably said that to the sympathy of donors, but that is a "no-no" in an election campaign.

An election campaign is a battle for public image and impressions. Donors and sympathizers go to the party that has the image of a winner. So you don't sob that you have no campaign funds and that nobody is donating. On the contrary, you pretend that there is plenty of money even if there is little and that more is coming in. It is a reality that the more donations pour into a political party, the more donors want to contribute. They get the impression that the party is a winner and donors always want to be on the winning side, otherwise their donations would go to waste.

But when a party cries, as JV did, that it is having difficulty organizing rallies because of lack of funds, potential sympathizers shy away. "*Aba, wala palang pera dito, doon na tayo sa kabila*," they would say. Sympathizers sympathize with candidates who have the money; money is like honey that attracts ants. No money, no honey to attract political leaders and camp followers.

Candidates and their handlers should exhibit extreme, even outrageous, optimism just like the independent candidates who have no chance of winning but who keep filing certificates of candidacy "for the funds of it." They should repeat like a mantra that all is over except the counting, "*tapos na ang boksing*" (the boxing bout is over), that the Senate poll results would be 12-0 in their favor even if they have only 11 candidates.

In short, the opposition started out with all the advantages but squandered these with wrong decisions and wrong moves. Hopefully, all these would be corrected with the change in the campaign manager. Opposition leaders should get their act together. There is still plenty of time before the moment of truth. The battle against the Arroyo administration shouldn't be lost by incompetence.

* * *

I don't understand the Commission on Elections. Why did it not disqualify Joselito "Peter" Cayetano when he is obviously a nuisance candidate out to sabotage the candidacy of Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano? Anybody who is not a Comelec commissioner can see that.

The Comelec said that the other Cayetano has been endorsed by the KBL and that makes him a legitimate candidate. But the Marcoses have disowned the KBL faction of lawyer Oliver Lozano, who is suspected of filing an impeachment complaint against GMA to sabotage the impeachment complaint of the opposition.

The KBL is nothing without the Marcoses. Its president is Ilocos Norte Gov. Bong Bong Marcos. So when they say that the Lozano KBLs are fake KBLs, you better believe it.

But the Comelec ignored this fact and approved the candidacy of the other Cayetano. Which makes people ask: Is the Comelec independent, or did it receive orders (from you-know-who) to support "Oplan 0" on the real Cayetano?

One more thing: I see the names of perennial candidates in the approved Comelec list. These are independent candidates who garnered minuscule votes in past elections, and have no chance of winning in the May elections. They are obviously nuisance candidates. There are also crackpots with delusions of grandeur who get a high by having their names listed publicly. Why were they not weeded out? It is a waste of paper, bought with taxpayers' money, to even have their names printed on the official lists.

Comelec, wake up!

* * *

Something big will happen on April 23, after the Holy Week. Watch for it. More information on it in this column later.

A couple of things

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE FIRST IS THE ISSUE OF ACTORS. I'VE read and heard a lot of comments from readers and viewers expressing dismay at several actors running in the elections. That's true particularly of Filipinos living abroad. They're completely embarrassed, they say, at the joke that Philippine elections have become.

I am not unsympathetic to that sentiment. There's little love lost between me and the showbiz folk that congregated around Erap and turned this country into a real tearjerker. The only production I raved over then was the impeachment trial, which might as well have been directed by Lino Brocka. It was a melodrama, with its share of heroes and villains, tears and laughter, but which resonated with all the elements of a morality play, a tale of good vs. evil.

I'm not unsympathetic to that sentiment but I have to warn shrilly against an uncritical view of it. At the very least, as Roy Alvarez told me rather wittily during Yes Magazine's 7th anniversary last week, some actors have been politicians at some point in their lives but all politicians have been actors at all times in their lives.

It's true. GMA herself, who ridiculed FPJ for being just an actor when she ran against him in 2004, rose to prominence not for being an economist but for being the "Nora Aunor of Philippine politics," a proposition sold by movie-type posters and calendars that depicted her in movie-like poses.

But forget even that. Just look at the characters in Team Unity and GO trying (badly) to act their way into the voters' hearts. Look at the prosperous Pichay, who got even more prosperous defending GMA from the "Hello Garci" scandal and leading the charge to kill the impeachment initiatives, with his Elvis Presley hairdo trying hard to convince the voters that if they plant *pichay* in the Senate with all the chemical fertilizers he is proposing, they will reap heaven. What can I say? Better plant *camote*. It's cheaper. And allows you to blow a lot of bad wind in the direction of the Pichays of this world.

And look at Mike Defensor with his "Walking 'Tol" ads. Serves him right to get the people he's paying. I mean, who remembers "Walking Tall?" Surely there are a lot newer and more intelligent movies out there to appeal to the youth?

But that brings me to a far more important point. It's not just that between a politician trying to be an actor and an actor trying to be a politician the choice is a fuzzy one. It's also that the growing (and justifiable) allergy to actors running for public office can—and often does—blind us to a greater danger out there, which is a category of candidates that pose a bigger threat to this country than actors. That is the *trapos*.

I've said it before and I say it again: Beware of the actors offering charm, but beware even more of the *trapos* bearing gifts. The harm that actors can wreak upon this country is nothing compared to the harm that *trapos* can do. Actors can only produce a farce, *trapos* can produce a dictatorship.

To this day, I still hear people say that it's all right that GMA cheated FPJ because she rescued this country from "another actor." The thought was explicitly articulated by several letter-writers during the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal, and though less directly put these days, it is still held by many, particularly from the rich and middle class. Well, look where we are now and ask yourself if we haven't been rescued from the frying pan into the fire.

Actors can only produce a comedy, *trapos* can produce a tragedy. And have.

The second thing is the apparent boon and bane of "economics" and "politics" respectively. The administration tack is to depict itself as representing "economics" and the opposition as representing "politics." The story line is that the economy is doing so well (a handiwork of the administration) but stands to be ruined by people obsessed with politics (the opposition).

At the very least what's wrong with it is its assignation of roles. Who can be more obsessed with politics than one who is obsessed with power and means to have it by lying, cheating and stealing? Indeed, by suppressing, coercing and killing? That scale of "politicking" hasn't been shown by anyone in the opposition, it has been shown by the head of the administration.

But more than that, you see what's wrong with that facile depiction of economics as good and politics as bad in the way GMA walked out of a press conference when our reporter, Gil Cabacungan, asked her why the presumed bounteousness has not turned into food on the table of the poor. She has since insisted she will not answer "political" questions, only economic ones.

But, of course, Gil's question was a political one. It was also an economic one. It was also a moral one. Hell, it was a completely commonsensical one. An explosion of growth that benefits only a small minority and pauperizes the rest of the community is not called vitality, it is called inequality. An explosion of growth in only one part of the body and does not affect the rest of it is not called health, it is called cancer.

Happily, there is a group of people out there who are helping to drive home the important point about politics being a good thing. They are the candidates of Kapatiran. Kapatiran expressly says in its fliers that it is a political group engaging in politics. It cajoles the public to be more concerned about politics, not less. Because what is politics really but the way we shape and wield power? What is politics really but who has the power and how they wield it? Politics is neither good nor bad. It is how we use it that makes it good or bad.

You vote for the decent candidates, that is good politics. You vote for the entertainers and the *trapos*, that's just stupid.

Manila Hotel or Plaza Miranda?

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

A SECONDARY DEBATE IS BOILING OVER THE venue of the "great debate" between the administration's and the opposition's senatorial candidates to crystallize election issues. The opposition has rejected the venue proposed by the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry: Manila Hotel. It prefers Plaza Miranda, which it deems "more accessible to the masses" than the function room of Manila Hotel.

The business community is sponsoring the debate at Manila Hotel on March 14, which is undeniably important, "to raise the level of political discourse during the campaign," as Sen. Manuel Roxas II has put it. The campaign has degenerated into name-calling and mud is splashing all over the place.

The fact that the business community is sponsoring the debate demonstrates that Manila Hotel is not a level playing field for such an encounter. It would favor primarily business interests and collaterally the administration. Manila Hotel as venue is a loaded dice.

Francis Chua, president of the federation, gave away the bias of the venue and at least his group's agenda when he said: "Our main concern is to prevent a repeat of the last three years where Congress was distracted from its main duty of legislation by numerous investigations. We want to see who among the candidates are serious in pushing for the national interests when they are voted into office."

This statement not only echoes the administration's focus on the economy as the main issue of the May election, an issue that diverts attention from the more controversial ones, such as its abominable human rights record, abuses of power, corruption and the Garcillano tapes. It also takes a swing at senators who obstructed economic reform measures of the administration and who used the Senate as a forum for investigations rather than for legislation. The debate seeks to unmask potentially "troublesome" senators and single them out for rejection by the voters.

The business community is not the best sector to deliver lectures on "public interest," as it defines it, or to speak on behalf of the public. It would be less hypocritical for it to recognize that its initiative on the Manila Hotel debate is self-serving. The federation, among all the business chambers in the Philippines, has been the most friendly to, and supportive of, President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the other day that the President would take a low profile during the campaign in order to focus on the "country's economic progress" rather than engage in a "tit for tat exchange" with the opposition "so that economic gains are not held hostage to political rhetoric."

Ms Arroyo has signaled that the central issue of the election is the economy, and the business community is serving this purpose by supporting a debate whose agenda would be framed by economic issues, to the exclusion of damaging political and social issues. The businessmen are playing into the hands of the administration.

The choice of either Manila Hotel or Plaza Miranda mirrors the divide of the electoral culture of Philippine politics and represents two sharply contrasting dynamics. Manila Hotel is the forum for the coat-and-tie crowd. It is where businessmen and their kindred spirit in the intelligentsia are at home. Plaza Miranda is the forum of the *masa*, the "*bakya* crowd." The latter responds to the *bomba* of the *miting de avance* of Plaza Miranda, while Manila Hotel caters to the "Kapihan" and the chattering class. But the outcomes of elections have been decided by the *masa* since our independence.

In the electronic age, the debate at either Manila Hotel or Plaza Miranda can reach the *masa* through TV. So, they will be equally informed by either forum but they listen and make their own judgments. It can't be said that the masses are ignorant and ill-informed. Nothing can be more wrong than underestimating or insulting their intelligence.

But what makes Plaza Miranda different is that the masses can "connect" with the rhetoric and bombast there. They cannot connect with Manila Hotel or the "kapihan," which speaks a different language or political idiom with which they cannot identify.

Plaza Miranda gives the masses a sense of participation in the political process, something that Manila Hotel cannot offer, being the haven of the political elite. Symbols are as powerful as the substance of political issues in propelling mass political movements. Plaza Miranda is a powerful symbol of protest and public outrage. It is in Plaza Miranda where protest movements can make the masses angry and build up outrage to throw out abusive governments.

Governments have risen and fallen in Plaza Miranda debates since 1946. When grenades nearly wiped out the opposition senatorial ticket in 1971, the public outrage nearly wiped out Marcos' senatorial ticket.

This is the dynamic and memory that the Genuine Opposition is trying to tap when they rejected Manila Hotel. They want to make the people angry at the abuses of the government. The people can endure corruption and other abuses of government until they reach the breaking point. That breaking point is violence and injustice.

Their patience snapped when Plaza Miranda was bombed and when Benigno Aquino Jr. was assassinated in 1983. Both events encapsulated violence, human rights abuses and injustice. This issue has been revived by the wave of human rights abuses. Its symbol is Plaza Miranda. The problem is that the opposition has not used this to its advantage and to get people angry.

How 'green' are they?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF CONTENDING PARTIES, dueling debates and electoral ad spending are issues concerning the environment, which "green" groups are determined to bring to the forefront of public discussions during this campaign period.

Spearheaded by Greenpeace and the EcoWaste Coalition, the "Green Electoral Initiative," as a statement avers, "aims to assess the 'greenness' of aspiring senators based on their positions on key environmental issues and produce a guide that will help Filipino voters make more informed choices in the coming elections."

Von Hernandez, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigns director, says that through the "Green Electoral Initiative," "we are challenging senatorial aspirants to disclose how the welfare of the environment figures, or doesn't figure, in their political plans."

As part of the initiative, the "green" groups are sending out survey forms to all the senatorial aspirants, which they hope the candidates will not only read and answer (just reading through the questionnaire is an education in environmental issues in itself) but also pledge to promote and adopt as a legislative advocacy.

The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with various environmental groups and focuses on key issues concerning water, solid waste, toxic waste trade and the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), genetically modified organisms, sustainable agriculture, logging, mining, climate change and air pollution.

"These are legitimate election issues that will have direct impact on community health and environment. As senatorial candidates woo us for our votes, it is their responsibility to tell the people their positions and planned actions on these issues," said EcoWaste Coalition coordinator Rei Panaligan.

While the groups will be sending letters and the questionnaire to every senatorial aspirant, I thought I'd reprint the questionnaire here for replication by other groups to send to their congressional and local candidates, because the environment is a local issue, too.

The first part of the questionnaire is reprinted here, while the rest will come out in Friday's column.

* * *

Climate and Energy Change

1. Will you support a moratorium on proposed coal-fired power plants and the transition of existing ones to renewable energy sources as a means to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions and help in the international effort to contain global warming? Will you also support a moratorium on other greenhouse gas emitting sources such as "sanitary" landfills, "waste-to-energy," cement kilns, etc?

2. Will you support a strong renewable energy legislation with high and binding renewable energy targets that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and assure genuine energy security for the country's future?

3. What legislative measures (i.e., demand-side management, market incentives, Integrated Resource Planning) will you initiate to mainstream energy efficiency in the country?

Water

1. Are you willing to commit a specific percentage of your Countrywide Development Fund (CDF) for the development of septage and sewerage management, treatment and infrastructure?

2. The pollution of our sources for clean water (e.g., freshwater, groundwater) is exacerbating the water crisis, with the prospects of severe water shortages in the future looming large. What legislative measures would you propose to ensure stricter protection of our aquifers (groundwater) as well as to provide stiffer penalties to polluters of water sources?

3. What steps will you undertake to ensure people's fair access to water and guard against monopoly?

SOLID WASTE

1. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003) mandates the closure of all dumps and the establishment of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) or ecology center in every barangay or cluster of barangays. Six years after the law took effect, the country remains littered with more than 1,000 open and controlled dumps. To date, only 1,723 MRFs or ecology centers exist in the country's 42,000 barangays. What legislative action will you take to ensure the effective implementation of RA 9003?

2. Thousands of families subsist by collecting discards from bins and dumps. RA 9003 barely responds to the waste pickers' socio-economic, health and other needs. How do you plan to plug this legislative loophole in RA 9003 so that waste pickers, including itinerant and dump-based waste pickers, will be recognized as integral players in the ecological and safe management of discards?

3. Will you support legislative measures that will compel companies to phase out toxic substances in their products, in packaging and in production systems as well as institute take back systems for their end-of-life products (e.g., computer waste etc.)?

4. Do you support banning certain types of plastics and disposables which contribute to our worsening waste problems? What are your views regarding slapping a kind of "sin" tax on disposable plastics packaging, taking into account that citizens and taxpayers are currently shouldering the costs of disposal of these types of waste materials?

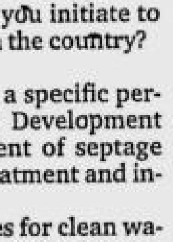
* * *

IN THEIR letter to the senatorial candidates, Greenpeace and EcoWaste Coalition said that, based on the candidates' responses (or non-response) to the questionnaire, the member groups "will come up with an assessment and a ranking of senatorial candidates which will be released to the public before the Earth Day celebrations this April."

The responses will be graded, using a scale of 0-10, by GEI-designated issue committees, with the candidates then ranked on the basis of total points secured.

Bridge between cultures

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

LAST WEEKEND, I WAS IN SHANGHAI TO attend the opening of Lucio Tan's beautifully appointed Eton Hotel. While everyone else spent his free time browsing through designer knock-downs and other bargain buys in the flea market, I headed for the Shanghai museum to visit a hall dedicated to Ching Banlee. I thought I would spend, at most, 15 minutes in the museum because all I wanted to see was the selection of paintings from the Ching collection that covered the Ming era to the 20th century. Mr. Ching made his fortune in the Philippines, quietly acquiring an important collection that was donated to the museum when he passed away by his children, Alfredo and Rita. The collection is so extensive that the exhibits have to be rotated a number of times each year, so if I find myself in the museum next time, I will see different paintings.

Aside from viewing this collection, I spent some time in the halls dedicated to furniture and ceramics because it is here that we see some connections between the Philippines and China. In the end, my projected 15 minutes turned into three hours, and I'm glad my guide Rosario Juan, who manages the Figaro coffee branch in Shanghai, was also interested not just in the artifacts but the way in which these were tastefully displayed.

The porcelain exhibition was arranged chronologically and traced the development of Chinese pottery from the crude-looking earthenware to the very sophisticated and colorful porcelain of the Ching period. While all this comprised a good introduction to the subject, I could not help but be reminded of two similar exhibitions currently available in Manila: a small display in Bahay Tsinoy Museum in Intramuros, and the more comprehensive one at Ayala Museum, this being a selection from the vast Roberto T. Villanueva collection. Both exhibits, curated by Rita Tan, trace the history and route of trade ceramics in the Philippines, and it is hoped that an exhibition catalogue will be published to give an interested reader an introduction to the subject.

I remember that when I was an undergraduate student at the Ateneo, the Rizal Library had glass cases full of trade ceramics, also arranged by type, style and chronology. These were supposed to teach us something, but many students then, as now, were too busy rushing in and out of the library to see and notice.

Our National Museum is filled with Oriental ceramics, and my students often complain that after their required visit there, they do not want to see another blue-and-white Ming jar or plate for the next 25 years. If people actually appreciate all the pre-Spanish history that comes with these broken pieces of ceramics, they can at least realize that we were not barbarians when Magellan accidentally strayed into our shores in 1521. We were already trading or at least having some relations with China, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia through these wares.

It was this idea of a connection or a bridge between our country and other cultures that made me try and learn something about Oriental ceramics, and I'm glad that aside from the dealers who are always willing to share their expertise (of course, with an eye to depleting my bank account), there is the Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines that continues to hold monthly lectures to educate its members and guests.

Since my mother collected ceramics, I grew up in a home with centuries-old jarlets, saucers and plates that I hardly ever noticed. As a matter of fact, my mother once moved my books out of their shelves and filled these with her collection of Thai ceramics. Naturally, I pulled them out of the shelves and placed them outside the door of my bedroom, resulting in a rather loud round of expletives. My mother even threatened to break a big 13th-century celadon plate over my head, but she changed her mind when she realized that the plate was worth much more than her son's head.

Years later, I came across a copy of the book by Leandro and Cecilia Locsin, "Oriental Ceramics Discovered in the Philippines," and this led me to take a second look not just at my mother's display cabinets but also the glass cases at the Ateneo Rizal Library and the National Museum. I took a course on Philippine pre-history under the late E. Arsenio Manuel and was challenged by a remark he made on his first lecture: "Where history ends, anthropology begins."

Then I decided to shift from history to archeology. I joined a week-long National Museum excavation in Batangas and realized that I was not physically disposed to the life of an archeologist. Historians work on desks in often air-conditioned libraries and archives; I was not cut out for field work in the sun. Worse, I think I became a historian to avoid math and the hard sciences in my college life, and archeology meant going back to school to learn really technical things.

Our week-long excavation in Barangay Laguile, Batangas, did not yield anything to rival the Manunggul jar, the Calatagan pot or the skullcap of the Tabon woman, but I learned first-hand how archeologists did systematic excavation and also how pot-hunters were always three steps ahead of the National Museum, taking the most valuable artifacts and leaving or destroying the rest, thus obliterating the archaeological context that would contribute to the jigsaw puzzle we call Philippine pre-history.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Women's paradise?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST YEAR, NEWSPAPERS ALL OVER THE WORLD NOTED that among the top 10 countries with the smallest "gender gap," the only developing country was the Philippines, which came in sixth.

In case you missed the news items last year, the top 10, out of a total of 115 countries, were: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Germany, the Philippines, New Zealand, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The Gender Gap Index, compiled by the World Economic Forum, was mainly based on a review of female-to-male ratios in four areas: (a) economic participation and opportunity, (b) educational attainment, (c) health and survival and (d) political empowerment. Besides these four areas, the index considered data on maternity and childbearing, education and training, employment and earnings, and basic rights and social institutions.

Given our high ranking, are we now to believe the Philippines is a paradise for women? I visited the World Economic Forum site (http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm) and downloaded several of the country reports, but never got around to writing about it. Today being International Women's Day, I thought it'd be a good time to revisit this index.

No. 1

The Gender Gap Index is useful because it allows a more concrete and comprehensive view of gender equity.

One glance at the data sheet for the Philippines and I could see why we did so well in the over-all global rankings. We ranked 1st worldwide for female-to-male ratios in 7 out of 14 main indicators: (a) legislators, senior officials and managers; (b) professional and technical workers; (c) literacy rate; (d) enrollment in primary education; (d) enrollment in secondary education; (e) enrollment in tertiary education; (f) sex ratio at birth; (g) life expectancy.

I would agree with those rankings. Women are very visible in both the domestic and international labor force and women do make it to fairly high positions here. In the area of education, our women are more literate and, yes, the boys tend to drop out from school in large numbers, at all levels.

The sex ratio at birth indicator may have intrigued some of you, so let me explain what that involves. Our female to male ratio at birth is 0.95, which means 95 females are born for every 100 males. This is the expected "natural" figure, and eventually evens out because the death rates for males tend to be higher than females. (Yes, we are the weaker sex, biologically speaking.) In cultures with very strong biases against females, female fetuses may be aborted at high rates, thus skewing the sex ratio to produce many more males than females. China's female-to-male ratio at birth, for example, is only 0.89.

"Healthy life expectancy" is another good indicator because it incorporates the quality of life aspect. For the Philippines, females can expect, on average, 61.5 years of healthy life while males come in only with 57.1. (Do I hear male readers gasping in despair?)

Contexts

We can be proud of how we've fared with the indicators I just described. But many of those statistics have to be looked at in context, and in relation to each other.

We may do well with female participation in the labor force, but in terms of wage equality, the World Economic Forum's survey found women only got 73 percent of what men did for similar work. Even more glaring is income, which includes non-wage sources, for example, small businesses. For the Philippines, women's income was only 59 percent of what men were getting. We see that all around us: our women have to work so hard doing laundry, small-scale buying and selling, and yet they earn so very little.

We know, too, how our women are often doubly oppressed, having to work outside the home while bearing the bulk of domestic responsibilities. That isn't measured in any of the Gender Gap Index indicators except for two, which both belong to "additional data" rather than the main indices. The two indicators are length of paid maternity leave, which is 60 days in the Philippines, and the leave benefits, which is 100 percent of wages in the Philippines. Compare that to Sweden, which pays 80 percent of wages for 390 days and another 90 days of a flat rate.

I am not advocating such generous maternity benefits for the Philippines; that would bankrupt all our business firms. The Swedish government has a hard time encouraging their citizens to have more babies while here, we're dealing with a completely different kind of problem, one which relates to the gender gap. The Gender Gap Index only looks at the current contraceptive prevalence rate (percent of married women on family planning). It would have been useful if they incorporated unmet need, which would be the percent of women who want family planning, but can't, whether because of opposition from their spouse, or because mayors like Manila's Lito Atienza ban contraceptives from government health facilities.

There are some intriguing indicators in the Gender Gap Index's "additional data" which deserve more attention. For "polygamy," our rating is 0, which means it is supposed to be absent, a plus point for gender equality. But tell that to the many Filipinas who suffer because their husbands believe polygamy is a right.

Another indicator used by the World Economic Forum is that of paternal versus maternal authority, with the Philippines scoring 0.10, 1 being the worst possible score and 0 being the best. What does "maternal authority" mean, and does that necessarily translate to enhanced women's welfare? For example, I've wondered at times if maternal authority is used only to further reinforce patriarchal rules.

It's the same question I have about another area where we supposedly did quite well for gender equity. Globally, we ranked seventh with the indicator "years with female head of state (last 50)" but I have to ask, just how pro-women were our two women presidents? We've been moving backwards in terms of women's health during the Arroyo presidency because of her stubborn opposition to family planning.

I will reiterate that the Gender Gap Index is an excellent resource, but we should go beyond rankings and look at the finer details of the report, looking at what each indicator means. For example, do we educate our daughters only so we can export them, in larger numbers now than men, as overseas workers? Is that something we should be proud of, or should we see this as another way of exploiting our women?

With elections coming around, the Gender Gap Index reminds us of the importance of political representation. The World Economic Forum reported that women make up 20 percent of the outgoing Congress, and a third of the Cabinet. Both opposition and administration senatorial slates are glaring in their weak women's representation, but let's try to make up for that by going after all candidates, women or men, and at all levels, to ask them about their positions on women's issues.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Prayer as a tool

IN THIS TECHNO AGE WHEN EVERY day is a race against time, for better lifestyle and social status, it's a must that one is equipped with all the necessary survival tools. A practical tool one should never part with is prayer. Yes! Seek ye first the Kingdom of God through deep and sincere dialogue with Him.

Upon waking up, before uttering a word or drinking coffee, just stay still and talk to God. The conversation will not only bless you, it will also give you a sense of direction on how to deal with the day's pressure and requirements. If you can wake up an hour earlier so much the better; but if you're not used to it yet, a few minutes should be enough to draw you into God's circle.

Start with praise and thanksgiving, then submission of self, say your request, seek forgiveness, then ask for guidance and protection. Continue doing this activity every day until God becomes the center of your life and you just revolve around Him. Mind you, it's really worth it.

—ZARA JANE JUAN,
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GSIS sensitive to pensioners' circumstances and concerns

THIS IS A REACTION TO ANUNCIACION S. Donato's letter "Can't we have a kinder system for getting our GSIS eCard Plus?" (INQUIRER, 2/8/07)

Donato's experience, we believe, was an exception. The inaccurate information she got when she went to the GSIS last Jan. 9 must have been a result of miscommunication—not of a "less kind" system.

When we started implementing the "No eCard, No Pension Policy" effective Jan. 1 this year, we also introduced changes in the procedure for paying retirees with pending requests for the resumption of their pension—which was Donato's case. We want the retirees to enroll on the day they file for such resumption, but it must be stressed that certain steps have to be taken.

First, upon filing the request for resumption, we create the retiree's pension record. Second, the pension benefits due him/her in the future is reviewed under the system's Claims and Loans Interdependency Policy (CLIP) program to determine whether all his/her loans (especially housing loan) have been paid; unpaid loans will be deducted from future pensions. Then, he/she can enroll for the eCard.

Hence, all that Donato could do last Jan. 9 was to request for the resumption of her pension effective March 21, her 60th birthday. With her pension record created and her pension benefits reviewed under CLIP, she can now enroll for eCard Plus at the GSIS central office in Pasay City.

Our ultimate goal is clear: the crediting of pensions in the eCard, a faster, more secure way to distribute pensions.

The enrollment process may initially cause pensioners minor and temporary inconveniences—like the "birth pains" that new government programs usually undergo. However, pensioners who already have their cards can attest to the advantages of the eCard: no more delayed checks, or lost checks due to mail pilferage; no more queuing in banks to deposit the checks; and no more waiting for three days for check clearance. With the eCard, they can immediately withdraw their pension from the nearest automated teller machine.

Soon, with the eCard Plus, pensioners need not go to GSIS servicing offices to meet the system's physical appearance requirement. All they have to do is simply put their eCard in the card reader of the GSIS Wireless Automated Processing System (G-W@PS) kiosk, (an ATM-like machine), select the online verification system on the menu and then place their finger in the biometric reader for validation in real time.

We thank Donato for bringing to our attention her concerns about the eCard. We would like to assure her and all GSIS pensioners that whenever we formulate programs and policies for them, we have in mind their circumstances (that is why we make sure our procedures are simple and easy to follow) as well as the growth and security of their pension fund.

—VELLY N. LUCILO,
manager,
Pension Administration Department,
Government Service Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

Never-ending appeals, soliciting for pity

LET ME EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION OF THE editorial on the plight of the "poor" nurses. (INQUIRER, 3/1/07) From the beginning, government officials and almost everyone felt sorry for the victims (the successful examinees of the June 2006 nursing board), but hardly anyone saw the country and the integrity of its licensure examinations as the bigger victims. From the beginning, "*palusot*" was the operative approach.

We are a nation of never-ending appeals. Even after the Supreme Court had made a final ruling, some lawyers and law firms would still try to pull the extraordinary feat of persuading the Court to change its mind—and unfortunately the high court had been occasionally wishy-washy.

Malacañang could have taken a decisive and firm handle on the "nursing crisis," but it did not. It played politics. It could have opted more for the common good and less for individual glory; for more grace and fortitude in adversity, instead of soliciting for "*awa*" (pity).

—RENE MIRANTE,
renemirante@yahoo.com

Clarifying retiree's homestead claim

IN REFERENCE TO A NEWS ITEM TITLED "69-year-old retiree seeks help over land" (INQUIRER, 2/28/07), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 4B vehemently denies the allegations in the report.

Based on the records of Cenro (community environment and resources office)-Mamburao, it's true that Teofilo Hermosilla has an approved Homestead Application on Lot 1107, Pls-21, located in Barangay Balansay, Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental. But his allegation that he planted the land in question with trees of different species is a lie. In their "Ulat Pagsisiyasat," barangay kagawad Charles Bautista and BRC member Ruben Custodio said that Hermosilla is not known in the area, never occupied the lot and never introduced any improvements thereon.

For one to be entitled to a homestead patent, he or she must have occupied the land applied for and introduced improvements thereon.

But even if Hermosilla did occupy the lot in question, such possession could not be considered valid entry. A portion of the lot is within a classified forest land; for this reason, no matter how long his possession of the land may be, it could not ripen into private ownership.

In response to his letter-request dated April 30, 1987, a certification as to the status of the lot was issued and this Hermosilla himself received. Hermosilla has also been verbally informed that under the Public Land Act, a forest zone is not subject to disposal; therefore, a survey authority cannot be issued.

As to the adjacent Lot 1106, it's true that it has been titled to Monina C. Carandang. This is so because the lot is alienable and disposable, and the applicant has met all the qualifications required of a person applying for a homestead patent.

Regarding Hermosilla's allegation that the Cenro never answered his letters, the fact is the Cenro has issued a certification in response to his letter-request and this Hermosilla has personally received. Also, on March 13, 2006, the Cenro sent him a letter advising him to hire a private geodetic engineer; a follow-up letter was sent on Aug. 11, 2006.

On Hermosilla's charges of dishonesty, gross inexcusable negligence, inefficiency, etc., the Cenro says these are all fabrications, the products of Hermosilla's filthy imagination. The truth is he could not comply with the requirements under the Public Land Act.

The Cenro's position is supported by a joint affidavit of two residents of the municipality.

Besides, the Homestead Application is still with the Cenro of Mamburao, contrary to his allegation that it's now with the Penro (provincial environment and resources office) of Occidental Mindoro.

—VICENTE S. PARAGAS,
Ceso 3, regional executive director,
Department of Environment
and Natural Resources,
Regional Office 4B Mimaropa,
1515 L&S Bldg., Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila

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10 senatorial bets under threat, ask PNP for more bodyguards

By Alcuin Papa

AT LEAST 10 SENATORIAL CANDIDATES, CITing "validated threats" against their lives, have asked the Philippine National Police (PNP) for additional bodyguards on the campaign trail.

Chief Supt. Romeo Hilomen, head of the PNP Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO), identified some of the candidates as former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, Mike Defensor, Surigao Rep. Prospero Pichay and actor Cesar Montano of Team Unity; and Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Manuel Villar, Ralph Recto, Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III of the Genuine Opposition (GO) coalition.

The PNP also has pending applications for security details from 30 congressmen. But Hilomen said they have yet to "validate" the threats against their lives.

The request for police security will have to be approved by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and PNP Chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Calderon.

Hilomen said the candidates can be provided a minimum of two police bodyguards. This can be increased to five upon request.

High profile

"The candidates are high-profile personalities. Anyone who wants to be famous can just harm the candidates. Those are their (candidates) concerns," Hilomen said.

He also revealed that most of the senatorial candidates already have security details.

Hilomen warned that a security detail for any VIP (Very Important Person) is subject to some conditions. It can be revoked if the VIP is the subject of a criminal case. The VIP cannot use the police bodguards as "utility workers," like family drivers and cooks. Police bodyguards are also not allowed to be employees of a business establishment owned by the subject. Finally, police bodyguards are not to be used to intimidate or harass anyone. Violations of these conditions, Hilomen warned, would warrant the pullout of the bodyguards.

The PSPO is in charge of providing security for VIPs in the country. Hilomen said they plan to turn over responsibility for securing VIPs to private bodyguards to be able to free up more policemen for general police duties.

The PSPO is conducting training programs for prospective private bodyguards, Hilomen said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 7, 2007
2nd Week of Lent
Perpetua and Felicity

1st Reading:	Jer 18:18-20
Gospel:	Matthew 20:17-28

When Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve aside and said to them on the way, "See, we are going to Jerusalem. There the Son of Man will be given over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law who will condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the foreigners who will mock him, scourge him and crucify him. But he will be raised to life on the third day."

Then the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons, and she knelt down to ask a favor. Jesus said to her, "What do you want?" And she answered, "Here you have my two sons. Grant that they may sit, one at your right and one at your left, when you are in your kingdom."

Jesus said to the brothers, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They answered, "We can." Jesus replied, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right or at my left is not for me to grant. That will be for those for whom the Father has prepared it."

The other ten heard all this and were angry with the two brothers. Then Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the nations act as tyrants, and the powerful oppress them. It shall not be so among you; whoever wants to be more important in your group shall make himself your servant. And if you want to be first, make yourself the servant of all. Be like the Son of Man who has come, not to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many."

Commentary

Jeremiah was assailed by everyone as a prophet. The citizens, the leaders, and priests all sought to silence him, punish him, abuse him and demean him—trip him up. They did not want to listen to his word, which was the Word of God. Instead they wanted the priests and prophets that they controlled to tell them what they wanted to hear. But Jeremiah stands before God and speaks on their behalf!

Jesus takes his disciples aside and tells them what is going to happen to him—how others will plot and conspire to destroy him. He is specific, telling them in detail of his suffering and torture, rejection and physical and psychological pain. But they do not listen. The mother of James and John comes in and asks for the seats of power in Jesus' kingdom—they all avoid the invitation to come and walk the way of the cross with Jesus. And Jesus tries once again to tell them of the cup of suffering/blood and that to sit at his right/or left means to die on the cross with him. "Please," he begs, "don't be like others." "Instead bend, serve, and watch me, and learn to give your life as ransom for many."

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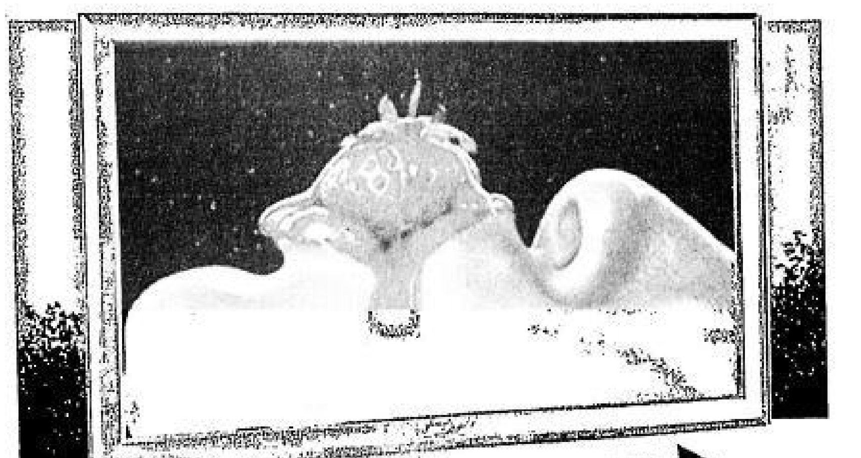

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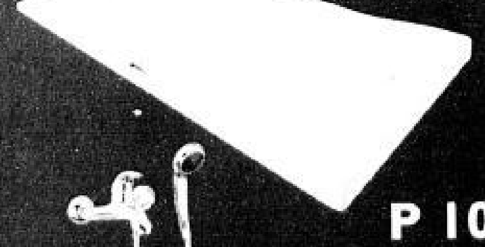

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Seminar Room 1 Lobby	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM BAKERY PRODUCT INNOVATIONS WITH PEA WHEAT FLOUR BLENDS Presentor(s): Wilburt Wong Hosted by: U.S. DRIED PEA & LENTIL COUNCIL 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM TRENDS IN HEALTHY BAKING Presentor(s): Nicanor P. Ines, Quality Assurance Manager Hosted by: UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. Flour Division	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN SEMINAR ON FLOUR FORTIFICATION PROGRAM Presentor(s). Hector Maglalang, Food Fortification Consultant Hosted by: A2Z PROJECT/PHILIPPINES 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH NESTLE FOOD SERVICE Presentor(s). Mr. Caloy Bacani, Business Executive; Mr. Jon Antonio, Business Executive; Mr. J. Jovanny Caminade, AVP, Channel Bus. Grp. Head Food Services Dept. Hosted by: NESTLE PHILS., INC. 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM LATEST TRENDS ON CAKES & DESSERTS Presentor(s): Ms. Janine Small, Bakery Technical Advisor, New Zealand Bakels LTD. Hosted by: BAKELS PHILS. INC	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN OVERVIEW ON PREMIX TECHNOLOGY Presentor(s): Rosario "Chato" Manresa, Vice President of PSB Hosted by: PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF BAKING 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM WHAT'S NEW FERNA - New Products from FERNA, The Food Ingredients Specialist Hosted by: FERNA CORP. 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM FOOD SAFETY & HYGIENE AWARENESS Presentor(s): Mr. Ranz Umali Hosted by: NCH PHILS.
Seminar Room 2 Lobby	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CHINESE BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY ASSOCIATION (IFCBCA) Induction	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM BAKERY MANAGEMENT Presentor(s). Mr. Tim Sieloff, Baking Instructor, American Institute of Baking Hosted by: U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM FOOD SAFETY Presentor(s): Mr. Al St. Cyr, Head Food Safety Education, American Institute of Baking Hosted by: U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES

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Elections delaying funds for Guimaras

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE elections are delaying the release of P800 million in funds earmarked for the rehabilitation of communities that had been devastated by the Petron oil spill in Guimaras, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo's budget secretary.

Rolando Andaya Jr. said the funds are available but projects and programs are being scrutinized to make sure these are directly related to the oil spill.

"With elections coming, we are very careful," said Andaya.

Guimaras officials earlier complained of the delay in the release of the fund which they blamed for the non-implementation of rehabilitation and livelihood projects more than six months after the MT Solar I, which was carrying over 2 million liters of Petron bunker fuel, sank off Guimaras in August last year.

The oil spill damaged the marine resources and destroyed the livelihood of thousands of residents in Guimaras.

The fund, which formed part of the P2 billion supplemental fund approved by Congress last year, would be released to different agencies that will carry out the rehabilitation and livelihood projects.

The money would also be used for research and monitoring of the impact of the oil spill.

Andaya said the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has released a total of P199 million as of last week.

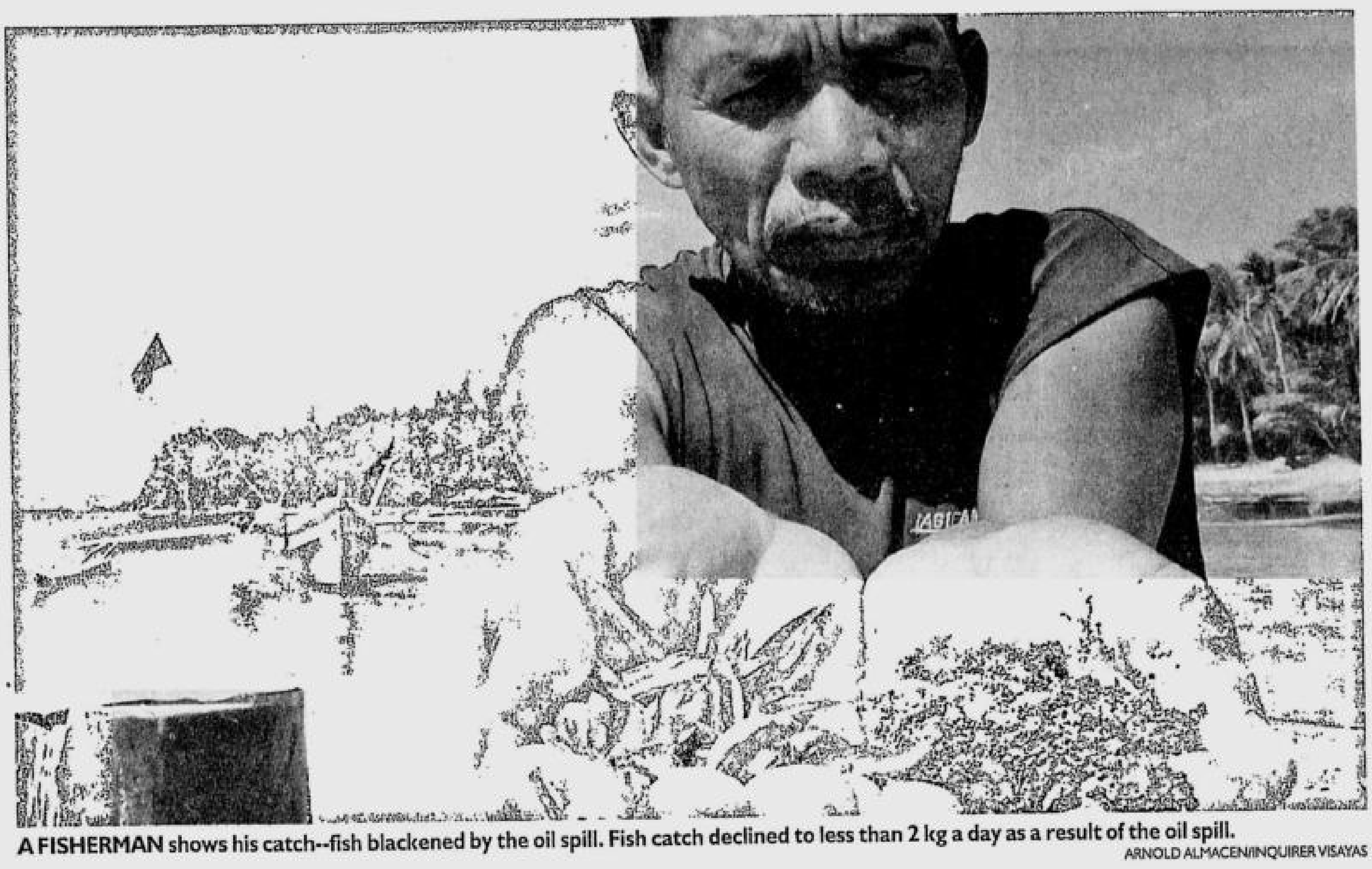
Last Friday, the DBM released P81 million for the Department of Agriculture (P50 million), Department of Science and Technology (P26 million) and Office of Marine Affairs under the Department of Foreign Affairs (P5 million).

Last year, the DBM released P118 million—P50 million for the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, P40 million for the local government units and P28 million for the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of National Defense and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Andaya said the budget department was closely scrutinizing the release of the funds to avoid the misuse of funds during the election period.

"We want to know where it is going and it must follow the law on spending during elections. It cannot be spent for projects that have no connection to the oil spill," he said.

The 45-day ban on public spending, which covers March 30 until May 14, prohibits the release of funds for the implementation of public works projects.



A FISHERMAN shows his catch--fish blackened by the oil spill. Fish catch declined to less than 2 kg a day as a result of the oil spill.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Bicol cop head says 'jueteng' strong in Albay

By Alcuin Papa

THE REGIONAL CHIEF OF POLICE of Bicol acknowledged the existence of jueteng and admitted he was offered bribe to tolerate the underworld numbers game.

Chief Supt. Ricardo Padilla, regional police chief, said he turned down an offer made by a jueteng lord to allow the illegal numbers game's operations in Bicol, particularly in Albay.

"There is still jueteng in Albay, I can tell you that. But we have been the only one to launch anti-jueteng operations even prior to the (ABS-CBN) exposé," Padilla said.

He also said he and his arrested 70 persons involved in jueteng who paid a total of P1.7 million in bail.

Padilla also related that he was once visited by known jueteng operator Elmer Nepomuceno who tried to bribe him and who asked if "it was okay to continue with the jueteng operations."

"If you become RD (Regional Director) there are a lot of people coming up to you. I told him 'It's okay to continue with the operations for as long as its okay to continue arresting jueteng people,'" Padilla said.

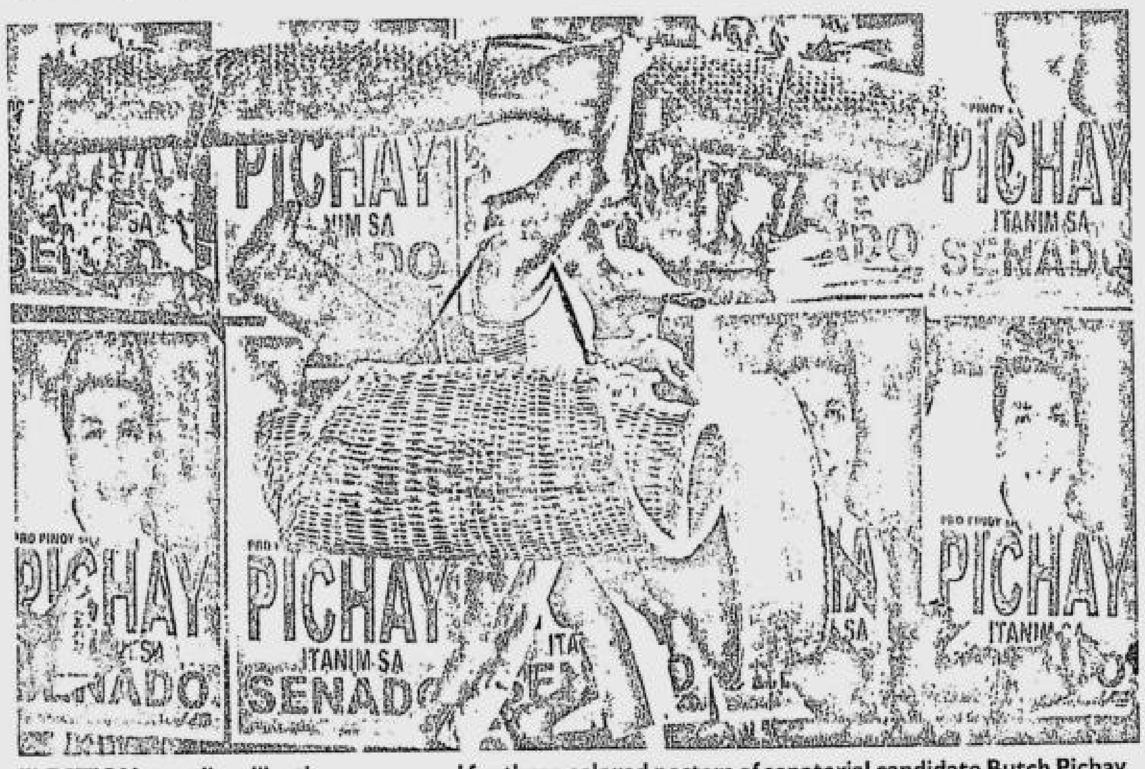
When asked by reporters why he didn't arrest Nepomuceno, Padilla said it would be "useless doing that. He can just say he was just joking. Then it would have amounted to nothing."

Padilla said anti-jueteng operations in his area will continue regardless of whose toes are stepped on. "We don't want to know who is behind the operations. We will just implement the arrests."

The Bicol Region is a known hotbed of the illegal numbers game jueteng.

A major TV network came out with an expose last week that showed the resurgence of jueteng in the area. A source of the network also said the operations continued with the express consent of Padilla.

A day later, Padilla denied jueteng operations were enjoying a resurgence in his area and said he had implemented arrests even before the exposé came out.



ELECTION spending, like the money used for these colored posters of senatorial candidate Butch Pichay, was not likely to cause inflation, according to the government.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Poll spending won't hike prices, says gov't

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE COUNTRY'S economic officials yesterday assured that increased election spending would not have an inflationary effect.

But they also warned that political violence, especially in the provinces and regions, could dampen the confidence of foreign investors.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said the increased spending would have little impact in the gross domestic product (GDP). The GDP is the total value of goods and services produced by a country.

Andaya said the spending would come from the private sector especially from the candidates and the political parties because of the 45-day ban on public spending during the election period.

Andaya said the Department of Budget and Management has already allotted P9 billion to the Commission on Elections for both the May elections and for the Sangguniang Kabataan and barangay elections set later this year.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the election spending "will have a very, very small effect on the inflation rate."

The inflation rate is the rate of increase in the price of goods and services over a given period.

Teves said that studies in the 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections showed the minimal impact of election spending on the economy despite the expected flow of money for political advertisements and propaganda materials.

Cops ask for reports on vote-buying, fraud

BAGUIO CITY—CORDILLERA POLICE officials have called on voters to report candidates who would buy votes to get elected into office.

Senior Supt. Joseph Adnol, Cordillera police spokesperson, said the regional police would create a hotline to receive information on vote-buying activities or election-related offenses.

"The police cannot do it alone. The people have to participate to ensure an honest election," Adnol said.

He said there were reports of vote buying during the election period in 2004, but not a single complaint was filed with the police and the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

"We have yet to see a politician being prosecuted for violating the election rules," said Senior Supt. Villamor Bumanglag, deputy director for operations of the Cordillera police.

He said the police would tap all available communications facilities to receive complaints from the public and to compensate for the lack of personnel to monitor violations.

He said the regional police have established 76 municipal election monitoring action centers (Memac) in the Cordillera to monitor, act and address any election-related incident or violation.

Lawyer Maribelle Uminga, election officer of the Comelec in the Cordillera, said a candidate caught buying votes would be charged with a criminal offense.

The candidate, if proven guilty, could be imprisoned up to six years with no probation. The candidate will also be disqualified from running in future elections.

Uminga said some people do not report incidents of vote buying out of fear of politicians or their supporters.

She said economics is the main reason many voters accept money from candidates. "But it is still important to tell people, through voters' education campaigns, that accepting money has repercussions," Uminga said. *Desiree Caluza and Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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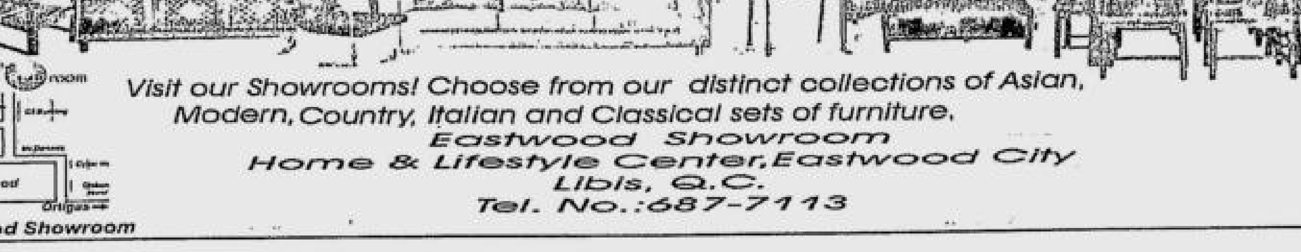

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Hometown as literature

Car Awards Group, Inc.
presents
3rd CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS
March 8, 2007
Rockwell Tent at the Plaza
Makati City

CAR of the YEAR

DISCOVER THE BEST OF THE BEST

The Board of Directors of CAR AWARDS GROUP PHILIPPINES (CAGI) cordially invites you to the 3rd CAR OF THE YEAR (COTY-P) awards night to be held at the Rockwell Tent, Rockwell Center, Makati City on March 8, 2007, 7:00PM

The Car of the Year is once again up for grabs along with the best of 11 best-in-class winners. Thirty five motor vehicles vie for top honors underwent quantitative and qualitative tests over a span of six weekends last November until this February at an enclosed area in Forest Hills Golf and Country Club, Antipolo.

The Car Awards Group, Inc. (CAGI), an independent, non-profit, non-stock association of 40 motoring journalists from more than two dozen print, broadcast and online media outfits, conducted the tests with the aim of recognizing and encouraging the achievement of higher engineering, design, performance and safety standards by car manufacturers.

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(FROM left) National Historical Institute Chair Ambeth Ocampo, F. Sionil Jose, and Rosales Mayor Ricardo Revita.
GABRIEL CARDINOZA

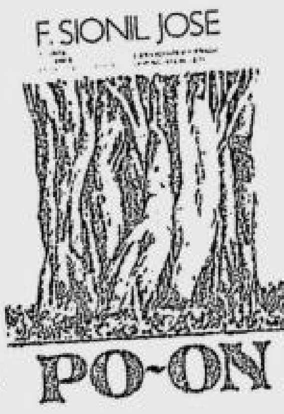
By Gabriel Cardinoza
Rosales, Pangasinan

ALMOST EVERY MONTH, National Artist for Literature Francisco Sionil Jose would travel from Manila to Pangasinan for four hours to visit his birthplace, a small farming village called Cabugawan in Rosales town.

Jose would travel with journalists, literature students and friends to show and tell them stories of the people, events, places and landmarks that he used as settings in his stories and had helped shape him as a child and eventually as a man of letters.

"I grew up in that small village," Jose proudly told a small audience composed of local government officials, teachers and friends during his most recent homecoming on Feb. 23.

That "small village" and this town would later figure prominently in the pages of Jose's five-novel masterpiece—the Rosales saga—consisting of "The Pretenders," "Tree," "My Brother, My Executioner," "Po-on" and "Mass," and his other works.



F. SIONIL Jose's novels

Jose revisited his hometown as part of the "Pagpupugay," a tribute organized by the University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Pambansang Samahan sa Wika Inc. and the Rosales government.

Poignant memories

In his short talk, Jose shared poignant memories of his boyhood, the hardship and the injustice that his family went through and his struggle to get educated and live a better life.

He talked about how he skipped his classes at the Rosales Elementary School to swim in the Agno River and dig *saleng* (pine splinters) from the riverbed.

"*Marigrigat kami, awan ti daga mi. Ngem kaasi ni Apo Diyos, daydi Inang ko, nagaget* (We were poor, we had no land. But with God's grace, my late mother was industrious)," Jose said.

His mother sold native cakes, did laundry jobs and sewed dresses "so we never missed a meal," especially during *gawat* or the "hungry" months of June, July, August and September when tenant farmers in his village ate only twice a day—at 10 a.m. and at 4 p.m.

But more than ensuring the family's day-to-day food for survival, his mother also valued education and made sure that Jose would have access to as many books that she could borrow.

"[My mother] went out of her way to get books for me to read because although, if you saw her, you would know at once that she was an ordinary peasant woman, the truth of the matter was she finished Grade 7 and she spoke beautiful English. She knew the value of education," Jose said.

His passion for reading would later take him to their school library, when his teacher, Soledad Oriel, opened the library to Grade 5 pupils, introducing him to the novels of Dr. Jose Rizal.

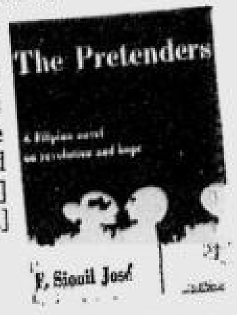
"I was so impressed by the Noli [Me Tangere] that when I reached that part where Crispin and Basilio were being accused of theft by the Spaniards, I cried," Jose said.

To be able to read at night, Jose said he made a lamp out of an empty bottle.

"But sometimes, we didn't have kerosene. And so I went to an electric lamp in the corner [of the village] to read," he said.

Jose would leave Rosales in 1938 after an uncle took him to study at Far Eastern University High School in Manila, only to return to his hometown when World War II broke out in 1941.

In 1945, when the American liberation forces reached Rosales, he joined the United States Medical Corps and was stationed near what is now Barangay Tumana.



This stint introduced him to American authors.

"In those days, the [US] Army had so many books available. And that was the only time that I got to read all the novels of [John] Steinbeck and [William] Faulkner," Jose said.

Writing stories

In writing his stories, Jose said he divided his memories—"memories of the past like the tenant farmer, my memories of small town tensions"—and in doing this, he derived so much from the memory of the simple town where he came from.

"So, I always tell my students to remember where they came from," he said.

Once, he said, he was asked by students: "Why should one write at all?"

"Those of us who are called cultural workers—and I mean not just writers, but poets, musicians, painters—so many of our leaders don't realize, *hindi nila alam* (they do not know) how important the arts are," he said.

These leaders may have just thought that writers are just entertainers that once they have entertained a person, their job is done, he said.

"No, you misunderstand the function of the arts, of the writer. Ask yourself, *ano ba ang mangyayari sa amin ngayon kung wala si* Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra? *Ano ang mangyayari sa England kung wala si* Shakespeare? *Dito lang sa Pilipinas*, what would we have been without Rizal (what would happen to us without Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra? What would happen to England without Shakespeare)?" he asked.

Cultural foundation

Jose said what the writer, the painter, the composer and all people do, which many of the leaders do not understand, is that they create the cultural foundation of a nation.

"I write because I want to ... give our people memories," he said.

"Perhaps, if we go to ask, if he were alive, Rizal the same question ... he would give you the same answer that I will give you now: I write because my tradition is this small town. And though it is obvious that I cannot come back here to live, I assure you, I never left Sitio Cabugawan, Rosales, Pangasinan," Jose said.

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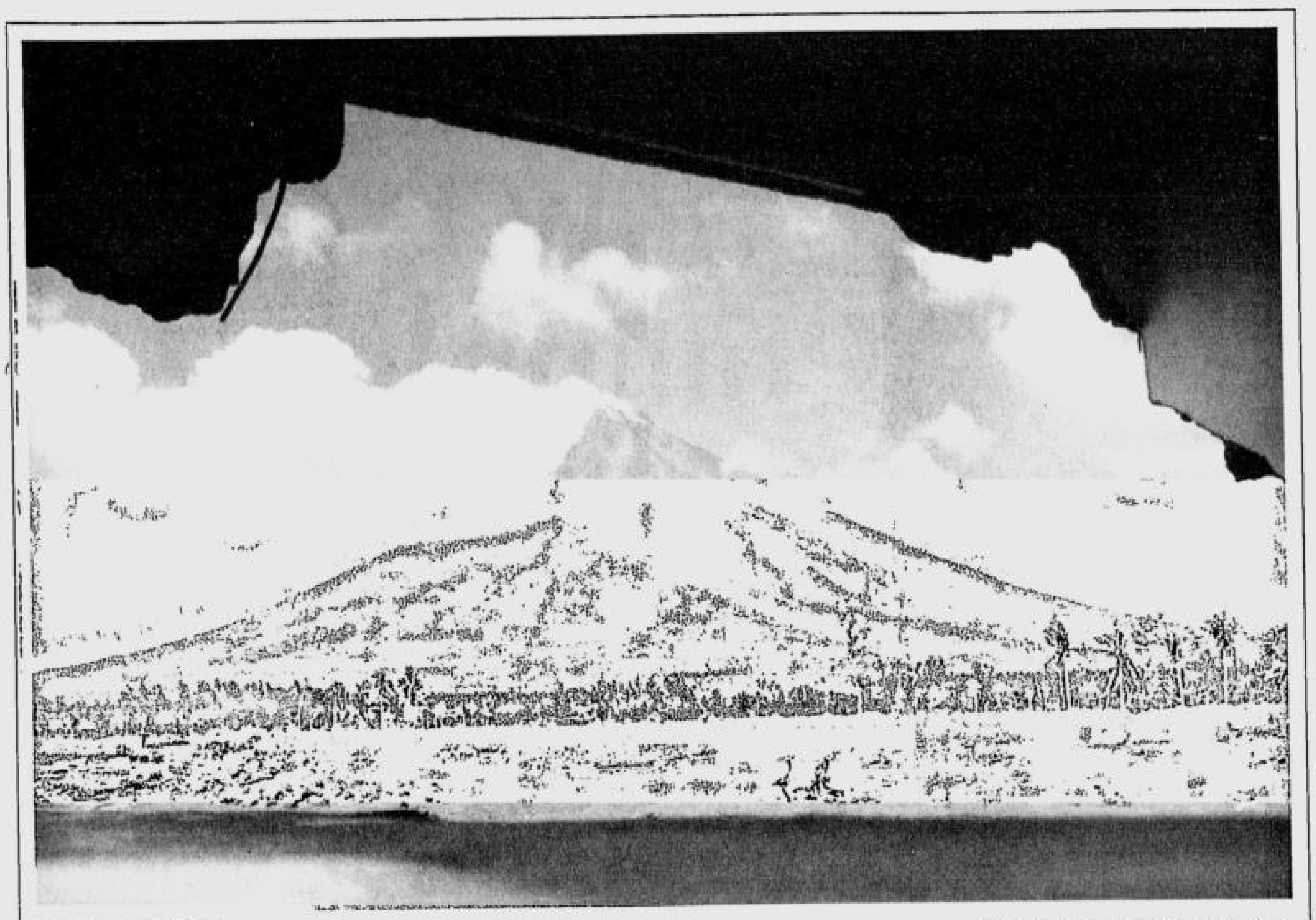

PRETTY SIGHT

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Mayon continues to awe visitors with its near perfect cone that masks the destruction that tons of lahar and mud wrought on villages down its slopes at the height of Supertyphoon 'Reming.'

Critics asked to give mine firm 100 days

LEGAZPI CITY—LAFAYETTE PHILippines Inc. (LPI) sent its third shipment of 1,415 metric tons of zinc concentrates to Korea, according to Junie Bernardo, chief of the mining, environment and safety division of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

The shipment came as business leaders appealed to the firm's detractors to give LPI 100 days within which to prove that its operations were safe and abide by environmental rules.

The appeal came from businessmen's groups in Albay.

The Rotary Club of Legazpi, Albay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Quota International Legazpi-Mayon issued a joint statement asking the project's detractors to give it a 100-day honeymoon period "to further prove itself."

The groups asked mining critics to check whether mining firms had been complying with requirements on how much they should spend for their host communities to improve lives.

"Vigilance is the price we must pay to hold Lafayette to all its commitments," the groups said.

"Everybody must keep an open mind at least for this period, which is a reasonable request. In the event Lafayette reneges on its commitments, then we will lead all concerned citizens to compel the DENR to revoke its ECC and license to operate," they added.

Bernardo said the estimated value of zinc concentrates shipped to Korea was about $500 per MT.

This developed as LPI's mother company, Australia's Lafayette Mining Ltd., completed a $15-million convertible note issue.

It was the first of a series of financial inflows that the company expected as a direct result of the government order early this month allowing LPI's mining project to resume commercial operations in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

Fund provider Southeast Asia Strategic Asset Fund (SEASAF) had been ready with the financing and was just waiting for Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, also chair of the Pollution Adjudication Board, to issue the order for the project restart.

Two weeks ago, the company made its first shipment of 865 MT of copper concentrate to China with an estimated value of $695 per MT. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Army says 17 MILF men dead in new clashes

THE MILITARY SAID 17 MUSLIM guerrillas and a soldier were killed in clashes in North Cotabato despite a ceasefire agreement between the Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Some 200 MILF fighters attacked government soldiers in villages near Midsayap, North Cotabato late Monday, triggering intense fighting, said Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, a spokesperson in the area.

Running gunbattles raged until early Tuesday, spreading to some 17 villages and forcing about 4,000 residents to flee their homes, officials said.

Ando said the MILF forces, who have fought for an independent Islamic state on Mindanao for nearly three decades, fired rocket-propelled grenades on army positions in the latest violation of a four-year-old ceasefire.

"We observed the ceasefire but the MILF keeps on firing at us," Ando told local radio.

Troops were forced to return fire in the clashes near the town of Midsayap, Ando said. He said one soldier was killed and two were wounded.

As of Tuesday afternoon, 17 MILF fighters were killed, the military said. An AFP reporter saw 17 bodies in a corn field and near a highway in the area but could not confirm they were MILF rebels.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said his forces had not initiated the fighting and blamed the military for encroaching on rebel-held areas and provoking the clashes.

"The soldiers arrived there last night, pushing the MILF against the wall, so we are forced to fight back," Kabalu said.

The MILF agreed to cut links with foreign terror groups and signed a truce with Manila in 2003, paving the way for formal negotiations with the government.

The latest fighting came amid efforts by both sides to revive the talks after they all but collapsed last year over MILF demands to gain economic control of what they claim are ancestral lands.

At least six people were killed and hundreds displaced when MILF and military forces clashed in the same area last month. Both sides later agreed to "reposition" their forces to end the hostilities.

Ando said another group of soldiers from the 40th Infantry Battalion tried to help their beleaguered comrades but were ambushed by MILF rebels in Barangay Sambolawan. One soldier, he said, died in the ambush while two others were wounded.

Last month, MILF rebels and armed civilians clashed over a disputed tract of land in Mudseng Village, sending hundreds of villagers to evacuation centers.

The government has an existing peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front, of which leaders of the MILF were once members.

Clashes had also occurred between MNLF members and government soldiers after the military said members of the terror group Abu Sayyaf had taken shelter in MNLF camps. *Edwin Fernandez and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao with AFP report*

ROUNDUP

Wife killer gets jail term

BAGUIO CITY—A judge here sent a man to a prison term of 20-40 years for clubbing and killing his wife in 2005. Judge Fernando Vil Pamintuan, of the regional trial court here, found Noel Luminang guilty of killing his wife, Rizza, inside their house in Barangay Bakakeng here. Court records showed Rizza died after Luminang repeatedly hit her with a piece of wood in the head. An autopsy report showed Rizza had a gaping wound in the forehead and her skull was smashed. The court said policemen saw Luminang dragging the body of his wife into a ravine near their house. The court dismissed Luminang's defense of insanity and asked him to pay Rizza's children P50,000 in damages.

Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon

25 rebels surrender

SAN FERNANDO CITY—At least 25 supporters of a rebel group operating in La Union and in the outskirts of Zambales and Pangasinan surrendered to the police on Monday. Officials of the Ilocos police said those who surrendered were members of the barangay organizing committee of the Marxista-Leninista Partido ng Pilipinas-Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (MLPP-RHB) and came from Barangays Dagup and Cardiz in Bagulin, La Union. Police officials said the group vowed to support the government in fighting insurgents in the province. Their needs will be addressed through the Ilocos police's "Bring Home a Comrade" project, which aims to assist rebel returnees by providing them access to education, livelihood and other assistance, officials said.

Hanna Lacsamana, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Help for muscovado producers

FORMER Senator Loren Legarda sought government support yesterday for muscovado producers to enable them to meet growing local and international demand for the traditionally processed "healthy sugar." In a press statement, Loren said that while Antique produces 70 percent of muscovado in the country, its average annual yield of about 3,500 metric tons is too small to meet demand. "As early as 1994, the United States wanted to import from the Philippines about 50,000 tons of muscovado. And with Japan regularly importing muscovado from us, it only shows the vast potential of this product," she added. An opposition candidate in the May 2007 senatorial elections, Loren said the demand for muscovado stems from its being considered a chemical-free health food containing minerals and trace elements beneficial to the body. Loren said the government can help muscovado producers, involving about 800 farmers tilling 570 hectares of sugarcane fields, by providing them micro-financing and technical assistance through cooperatives.

Animal bite clinic

LUCENA CITY—A Makati-based clinic volunteered to establish the first Animal Bite Treatment Center in Quezon province. On Friday, Chito San Agustin, business development manager of Family Vaccine and Specialty Clinics Inc. based in Makati City, said here that his company would put up the first animal bite treatment center in the Unisan community hospital in two weeks. He said a dog bite victim normally needs at least eight vaccinations, which cost a total of P12,000 to P15,000. He said the project had been planned last year but was temporarily shelved. He did not elaborate. There are 1,400 reported rabies cases every year in the country. However, while there were 115,000 reported dog bite victims in 2005 alone, there could be 100,000 rabid dogs in the country, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry. According to Sen. Pia Cayetano, the Philippines ranked 5th or 6th in the world in terms of rabies-related deaths.

Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Barangay official shot dead

TACLOBAN CITY—Four men believed to be members of the New People's Army (NPA) shot to death on Monday a barangay official in Dolores town, Eastern Samar. First Lt. Jose Mari Chico, public affairs division chief of the 8th Infantry Division, said Maximo Talavera who was shot around 7 a.m. inside his house in Barangay Dampigan, 15 km from Dolores town. Chico said Talavera was killed after he refused to pay taxes to the rebel group.

Joey Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

Benguet prepares ban on chemical pesticides

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—DETERmined to maintain the safety of this town's vegetables, the local agriculture office said it would crack down on commercial farm inputs that have not been certified as safe by the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority (FPA).

Fely Ticbaen, municipal agriculture officer, said the restriction would also apply to dealers and sales agents of chemical companies who sell products that are not FPA certified.

These agents often attend farmers' meetings to demonstrate their products.

Ticbaen said the move was an offshoot of Mayor Nestor Fongwan's recent order banning the sale and use of highly toxic pesticides and fertilizers in the town's farms.

Fongwan earlier asked the local agriculture office to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture and the FPA to ensure that no toxic chemicals were sold.

In his order, Fongwan noted reports that reached his office about some companies that sell banned and regulated pesticides to local farmers.

The town has 18,329 vegetable, fruit trees, root crops, strawberry and cut flower farmers.

FRUITS & VEGE

VEGETABLES from Benguet farms arrive at the trading post.

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

It has an agriculture area of 2,384.17 hectares that produce an average of 141 metric tons of potatoes and 22,519 metric tons of leafy vegetables a year.

Aside from strawberry and cut flowers, the town also produces cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, celery, pechay, mustard and green onions.

Officials are now preparing for a month-long strawberry festival that will start on March 9.

The town's farmers groups have supported moves to shift to organic farming to discourage farmers from being dependent on commercial farm inputs.

"Avoiding the use of toxic chemicals is part of good agriculture practice," Ticbaen said.

The only way to become globally competitive is to eliminate the use of chemicals that destroy the soil's fertility, she said.

In this province, the campaign to improve farmers' production and fight vegetable importation is fast shaping up as a major political issue among the province's gubernatorial candidates.

Mayor Nestor Fongwan (Kampi) and former Vice Gov. Edna Tabanda (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) will challenge the reelection bid of Gov. Borromeo Melchor (Lakas-CMD) but farmers and the industry's stakeholders said they would vote for the candidate who staked a lot for the industry.

The province has more than 200,000 farmers.

The Benguet Farmers Federation Inc. (BFFI), Benguet Truckers and Traders Association (BTTA), farmers' cooperatives, farmers' groups and various traders' groups at the vegetable trading post here have started reviewing the performance chart of the three candidates.

But the rivalry between Fongwan and Melchor appears to be more colorful, they said.

Both were former political allies but were often caught avoiding each other in occasions they were both invited as speakers. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Defensor, Angara, Villar top list of poster violators

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THREE SENATORIAL candidates and three party-list groups top the list of violators of the Commission on Election guidelines on campaign posters.

City election officer Roy Cuevas told the INQUIRER that topping the list are senatorial candidates Mike Defensor and Edgardo Angara of the administration's Team Unity and Genuine Opposition bet Manuel Villar.

Their campaign posters, Cuevas said, can be seen on walls near the Zamboanga City International Airport and on electric posts here, which are not designated common poster areas.

Cuevas named the party-list groups as the Suara, Assalam and Anak Mindanao or Amin.

"Actually all the candidates are committing violations but those I mentioned are committing more violations," Cuevas explained.

But Cuevas said Anak Mindanao supporters have started removing the posters.

Cuevas said they could not file charges of disqualification against the candidates "because we are still awaiting word from our legal department."

Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

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Unveiling the new face of Philippine TV

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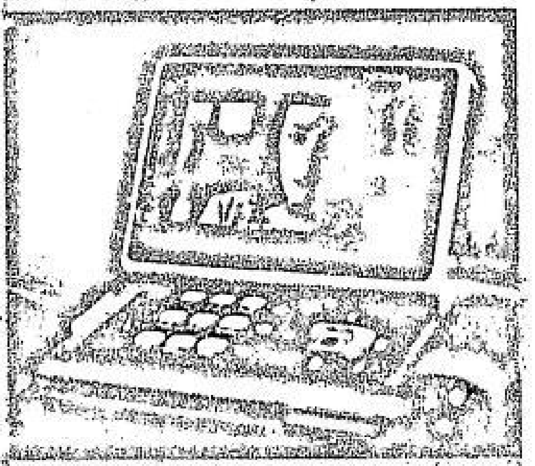
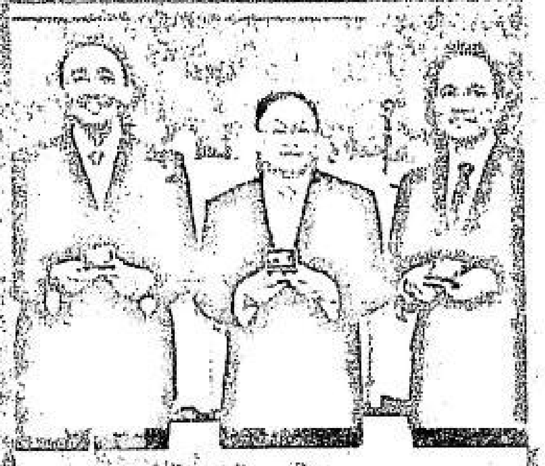
That's the new face of television announced by PLDT and Smart Communications chairman Manuel Pangilinan before a select group of print and broadcast journalists during a media briefing on the PLDT Group's 2006 performance.

"We are introducing a new era of television viewing in the Philippines," Pangilinan said.

Now on test broadcast, this new Mobile TV service is being offered by MediaQuest Holdings in cooperation with mobile service leader Smart Communications.





Initially available in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao, the test broadcast service offers TV programming that viewers are all familiar with. Nine channels including 24-hour news channels CNN, BBC World and CNBC, sports channel Basketball TV, leisure and entertainment channels such as Jack TV and Fashion TV, and music channel MTV are now available.

"Together with Smart, we aim to revolutionize the way Filipinos watch and enjoy television by delivering their favorite TV shows to their Mobile TV-enabled handset," MediaQuest Holdings President and CEO Orlando Vea said. "We are targeting commercial availability of the service by mid 2007."

People who have tried the service in trials that began last December have been impressed and amazed.

"Ang galling! It's portable and handy. With this, I can watch basketball anywhere I am," a basketball fan said.

"It's so interesting. Parang yung TV nasa bulsa ko," said a student who rushes home from school to catch his favorite soap. With Mobile TV, he adds, he won't mind getting stuck in traffic.

"Very entertaining and convenient! I can use this in my constant travels, especially while waiting at the airport," said one frequent traveler.

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SMART

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Bridge reopens after traffic scuttles dry run

Motorists say alternate routes narrow

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TULLAHAN BRIDGE IN VALENZUELA City was reopened to motorists yesterday, just hours after the structure was closed to traffic—part of the dry run for a traffic rerouting scheme that would be implemented when the bridge is closed for rehabilitation this coming Friday.

Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian ordered the bridge reopened at 10:30 a.m., more than four hours after the dry run begun.

By 8 a.m., traffic in the area had slowed to a crawl, forcing commuters to alight from jeepneys and walk.

Traffic on the southbound lane of the MacArthur Highway was also affected, up to Edsa Balintawak.

"The mayor had to step in and order its reopening until further notice," according to Marither Menia, the city's press information officer.

She said that a 100-member composite team was deployed in the morning in preparation for any problems arising from the dry run.

"We had enough personnel in place to address the traffic situation," Menia added.

The 73-year old bridge connects the cities of Valenzuela, Malabon and Manila to Bulacan province.

The dry run was in preparation for the repair of the bridge which will be carried out by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) beginning Friday.

The DPWH plans to raise the bridge's clearance by several meters to keep it flood-free and passable even to light vehicles during high tide and in preparation for the start of the rainy season.

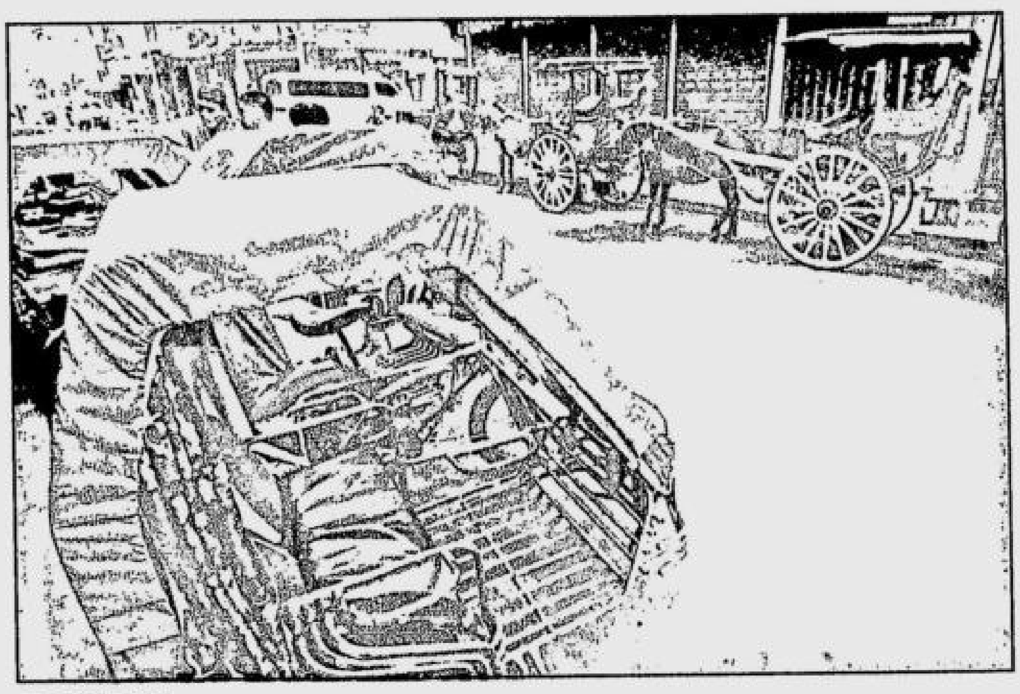
Menia said yesterday's reopening of the bridge was recommended by the city's Traffic Management Office after traffic in the vicinity of the bridge worsened.

According to jeepney drivers, some of the designated alternate routes were too narrow.

"*Nahirapan kami kasi makitid yung mga daan kaya nagka-buhol-buhol yung mga sasakyan* (Traffic was snarled because the roads were too narrow)," said Paeng Ortega, a driver who plies the Recto-Malanday route.

An estimated 60,000 vehicles cross the bridge every day.

BRIDGE/ A22



SLOW DAY Pedicab drivers huddle in a group while calesa (horse-drawn rig) operators rest in their carriages while waiting for passengers on Gandara Street in Binondo, Manila.

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Suspected rob gang members nabbed

By Julie M. Aurelio

A ROBBERY GANG THAT HAD ENGAGED law enforcers in a gun battle last month has been linked to a string of daring robberies in Metro Manila and Cavite province in the past year, according to the National Capitol Region Police Office (NCRPO).

Victims of the Alma Gang trooped to the NCRPO headquarters in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City last week to identify two alleged members of the group arrested by police on Feb. 19.

Joven Junto Amondina and Harvey Francisco Balanza were arrested following a shootout with police who responded to a robbery at a Jollibee outlet on Taft Avenue corner Libertad in Pasay City. Another alleged member, Arthur Azuno Amorganza, was killed in the incident.

Supt. Rommel Miranda, NCRPO public information officer, told the INQUIRER that the gang was behind several robberies in the cities of Pasay, Makati, Pasig and Marikina as well as several daring heists in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Police also pointed to the gang as suspects in several robberies in Pasay City, all involving banks; and two in Cavite—one involving a garments factory in Rosario town and the other, the Lotus Mall in Imus.

The gang is believed to have pocketed more than P7 million from their operations in the past two years.

Based on witnesses' testimonies, Amondina and Balanza were found to have participated in at least six robbery incidents in 2006 and 2007. The latest was on Feb. 19 when they allegedly robbed a dentist who had just withdrawn money from a Pasay City bank.

The group, which is allegedly headed by a certain "Alma," preys on victims carrying large amounts of money withdrawn from banks. They also do not hesitate to shoot their victims if they resist, police said.

Charges of robbery, illegal possession of firearms and violation of the Omnibus Election Code are being readied against the suspects.

CA junks petition on BF gates issue

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS DISMISSED the petition of the Parañaque City government questioning the issuance by a lower court of an order stopping the opening to the public of two roads in BF Homes Parañaque Subdivision.

In a resolution dated Feb. 28, the appellate court said the petition, filed by then Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, was already moot and academic since the Muntinlupa Regional Trial Court subsequently issued a writ of preliminary injunction which stopped the opening of the roads.

Marquez alleged in his petition that the lower court's issuance of a TRO was done without a notice of any hearing.

"Verily, the subsequent issuance of the writ of preliminary injunction thereof rendered moot and academic the question of propriety and regularity of the issuance of the assailed TRO," the appellate court said.

It also noted that while it was hearing the petition filed by the city government, the Muntinlupa RTC held a hearing which the local government attended. Marquez then issued an executive order opening the gates on Aguirre Avenue and El Grande Streets in BF Homes Parañaque to the public to ease traffic flow on nearby main roads.

But the president of the United BF Homeowners' Associations Inc. questioned Marquez's order, saying it was an invalid and improper exercise of police power. The group later brought the matter to the Muntinlupa RTC which issued a TRO stopping the opening of the roads to the public within the subdivision. Last November, the appellate court lifted the injunction and control over the roads returned to the local government.

ELECTION 07

2 Roberts to run for Pasig mayor

By Santiago R. Alcantara

IT'S ROBERT AGAINST ANOTHER ROBERT in the upcoming race for the mayor's seat in Pasig City this May.

Incumbent Mayor Vicente Eusebio yesterday said he was giving way to his son, Councilor Robert "Bobby" Eusebio, who will face off with his father's foremost political rival, Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr.

The mayor said that rather than run for a second term, he would throw his support behind his son, who is on his third term as city councilor.

He added that he was giving way to the idealism and dynamism of the youth.

The younger Eusebio's running mate will be Yoyong Martirez, the incumbent vice mayor who used to be a basketball player like Jaworski.

The Pasig mayor and Jaworski have been at odds since the latter accused the older Eusebio of having a hand in operating the shabu market which was busted last year.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

A. The JBC is now accepting applications for judgeship positions in the following courts:

NCJR
CALOOCAN CITY
RTC Br 120
MANILA
RTC Brs. 11 & 42
PASAY CITY
RTC Br. 117
PASIG CITY
RTC Br. 166

REGION I
ABRA
MTC Bucay

ILOCOS SUR
11th MCTC Sta. Cruz-Sta. Lucia
4th MCTC Narvacan-Nagbukal-Santa

PANGASINAN
MTC Infanta
1st MCTC Burgos-Mabini-Dasol
10th MCTC Natividad-San Quintin

REGION II
ISABELA
12th MCTC Mallig-Quezon
14th MCTC Ramon-San Isidro

QUIRINO
MTC Diffun

REGION IV
BATANGAS
RTC Br. 85, Lipa City

LAGUNA
MTC Los Baños

MINDORO OCCIDENTAL
MTC San Jose
MTC Sta. Cruz
3rd MCTC Magsaysay-Rizal Calintaan

PALAWAN
9th MCTC Brooke's Point Española

REGION V
CAMARINES NORTE
1st MCTC Capalonga-Sta. Elena

MASBATE
RTC Br. 48, Masbate City
2nd MCTC Mandaon-Balud
4th MCTC Placer-Cawayan-Esperanza

SORSOGON
MTC Bulan

REGION VI
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL
MTC Kabankalan

REGION VIII
NORTHERN SAMAR
5th MCTC Mondragon-San Roque

REGION X
AGUSAN DEL NORTE
1st MCTC Magallanes-Las Nieves

AGUSAN DEL SUR
2nd MCTC Trento-Sta. Josefa-Vernela

REGION XI
COMPOSTELA VALLEY
1st MCTC Compostela-New Bataan

DAVAO DEL NORTE
RTC Br. 1. Tagum City

SURIGAO DEL SUR
MTCC Bislig City
MTC Tandag
3rd MCTC Tago-San Miguel

REGION XII
MAGUINDANAO
5th MCTC Upi-South Upi

NORTH COTABATO
3rd MCTC Kabacan-Carmen-Banisilan

Applications or recommendations must be submitted **NOT LATER THAN April 10, 2007** to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512 Fax No. 552-9598; Email addresss jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph; jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph). Applicants must submit 6 copies of the following:

Application or Recommendation Letter
Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form I down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)
Picture (2x2)
Certificate of Good Standing or latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer
ITR for 2 preceding years
Clearance from NBI, Ombudsman, Office of the Bar Confidant and Employer
Transcript of Records
Police Clearance from place of residence
Certificate of Admission to Bar (with Bar Rating)

B. The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for different judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (Region VI) - ILOILO CITY: (Br. 33) AGUILAR, Narciso M.; **BARTOLOME**, Nelson J.; **BIONAT**, Jeremy V.; **BRILLANTES**, Winefredo E.; **CAMARISTA**, Andres W.; **CASTROJAS**, Rudy P.; **DEL CASTILLO**, Filpia D.; **DELGADO**, Alpha S.; **DEMAISIP**, Jose P.; **DIAMANTE**, Domingo D.; **DIVINAGRACIA**, Elsa R.; **DORONILA**, Arturo G.; **GUERRERO**, Fernando Jr. Y.; **JURAO**, Sylvia G.; **LADRIDO**, Ma. Dianela O.; **PASCO**, Lyna B.; **RAVANERA**, Manuel R.; **REY**, Anita J.; **SANTILLAN**, Hannibal V.; **SINDINGAN**, Federico C.; **SODUSTA**, Immanuel L.; **SULANO**, Jessie G.; **ZERRUDO**, Alexis A. **GUIMBAL, ILOILO: (Br. 67) BIONAT**, Jeremy V.; **DIAMANTE**, Domingo D.; **DORONILA**, Arturo G.; **SARABIA**, Ma. Rita B.; **SULANO**, Jessie G.; **ZERRUDO**, Alexis A. **SAN CARLOS CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL: (Br. 57 & 58) ALCANTARA**, Antonio Manuel A.; **AMISOLA**, Danilo D.; **CARDINAL**, Manuel Jr. O.; **DINOY**, Tolomeo A.; **SARABIA**, Ma. Rita B.; **SARSABA**, Nilo M.; **SINCERO**, Jedideoh F.; **SULANO**, Jessie G.; **TENERIFE**, Danilo M. **(REGION VII) - CEBU CITY: (Brs. 5, 6 & 8) AGUSTIN**, Reu Lawrence D.; **ALTUBAR**, Ruben F.; **BANAAG**, Eduardo C.; **CAHIG**, Avito P.; **CANOY**, Victor A.; **CLAVE**, Hilda S.; **DANIOT**, Eliseo A.; **ENJAMBRE**, Lucila C.; **ESTORNINOS**, Filotea M.; **FERNANDO**, Carlos C.; **GALANIDA**, Teresita A.; **GEROMO**, Felixberto M.; **GERONA**, Rofebar F.; **GESTOPA**, Gerardo Jr. E.; **GONZALEZ**, Ma. Daisy P.; **GEURRERO**, Fernando Jr. Y.; **HADJIRASUL**, Macaundas M.; **HERMOSISIMA**, Elizabeth D.; **IWAY**, June Beatrice L.; **JACA**, Cornelio T.; **JIMENEZ**, Bernardo Jr. R.; **MARIGOMEN**, Douglas Arturo C.; **MONTOJO**, Peter M.; **NAVARRO**, Donato Sotero A.; **ONG**, Manuel F.; **OTADOY**, Eusebio Jr. I.; **PANSOY**, Federico V.; **PO**, Jocelyn G.; **RAMOS**, Benjamin R.; **REDULA**, Omar B.; **ROSALES**, Edgemelo C.; **RUIZ**, Joseph Cedrick O.; **SANCHEZ**, Aida A.; **SENO**, Malcolm V.; **SEVILLA**, Francisco Jr. A.; **VELOSO**, Ester M.; **VILO**, Perla C.; **XENOS**, Dax G.; **YU**, Bartolome D. **LARENA, SIQUIJOR: (Br. 46) AGAN**, Juditho J.; **ALCANTARA**, Antonio Manuel A.; **BOHONSUA**, Alejandro Jr. S.; **CANDA**, Alejandro T.; **EDAYAN**, Roland G.; **HIMALALOAN**, James Steward E.; **XENOS**, Dax G.; **ZERNA**, Joseph Arnel M. **(Region VIII) - BORONGAN, EASTERN SAMAR: (Br. 2) CATALO**, Leandro C.; **ESCOTO**, Gina C.; **ITAO**, Romeo D.; **MACARINE**, Ignacio B.; **MERIN**, Cesar M.; **REAGO**, Lorenzo A.; **UMIL**, Cornelio II M.

METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT (METC): (NCJR) - CALOOCAN CITY: (Brs. 49, 50, 51 & 52) BIADO, Eva Maria M.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC): (Region VI) - BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL (Br. 7) BAYONA, Abraham A.; **BOLUNIA**, Therese Blanche A.; **CUÑADA**, Victor B.; **DEL PILAR**, Marcelo B.; **TUPAS**, Edgar R. **LA CARLOTA CITY: ARSENIO**, Evelyn D.; **JAVELLANA**, Erwin B.; **LANARIA**, Gregorio A.; **TUPAS**, Edgar R. **SAN CARLOS CITY: ARSENIO**, Evelyn D.; **ESCORIAL**, Florita L.; **PARCO**, Peter Z.; **PORMENTO**, Evillo C. **PASSI CITY, ILOILO: BARTOLOME**, Nelson J.; **DIDULO**, Irene B.; **GO**, Vicente V.; **MARAÑON**, Jerry F.; **PALOMAR**, Hernando Jr. S. **(REGION VIII) - MAASIN CITY, LEYTE: GRAPILON**, Fidelina Q.; **LEONIDO**, Edgardo C.; **TALAPIERO**, Mila C.; **YU**, Girlie B.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC): (Region VI) - KALIBO, AKLAN: BARRIOS, Alicia C.; **CIPRIANO**, Maribel D.; **IBARRETA**, Rhea V.; **OFIALDA**, Freddie A.; **PATNUBAY**, Montalid Jr. P.; **SOSITO**, Julia Cecily C.; **TEJADA**, Eva Vita T.; **TOLENTINO**, Ronquillo C. **(Region VIII) - SAN FRANCISCO, SOUTHERN LEYTE: ESTRELLER**, Efigenia N.; **GRAPILON**, Fidelina Q.; **LIBUTAN**, Estefanio Jr. S.; **VILLAR**, Alan A. **ALBUERA, LEYTE: LEONIDO**, Edgardo C.; **MERCADO**, Lolita R.; **NAVAL**, Carmelita M.; **ROSADIÑO**, Armando L.; **TALAPIERO**, Mila C.; **VILLAR**, Alan A.; **YU**, Girlie B. **LAOANG, NORTHERN SAMAR: CHIN**, Elino C.; **POTOT**, Eduardo N.; **ROSADIÑO**, Armando L.; **SY**, Cornelio A.

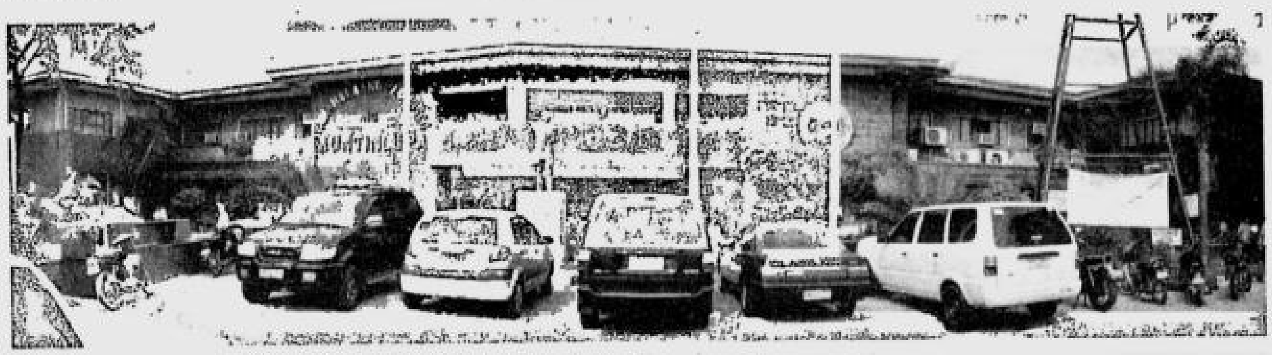
MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (Region VI) - CALATRAVA-TOBOS, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL: ARSENIO, Evelyn D.; **IGNALAGA**, Tarjata C.; **YAP**, Mila D. **SARA AJUY-LEMERY, ILOILO: CAMACHO**, Rodrigo P.; **ESPA**, Gonzalo S.; **GO**, Vicente V.; **PALOMAR**, Hernando Jr. S.; **PAYBA**, Elizabeth S. **DAO-IVISAN, CAPIZ: DULLANO**, Lorenzo B.; **ESPA**, Gonzalo S.; **HONRADO**, Ramcez John A.; **STA. ANA**, Willie T.; **TIANGCO**, Kristine B. **LIBERTAD-CALUYA, ANTIQUE: BARRIOS**, Alicia C.; **PALOMAR**, Hernando Jr. S.; **SALVANI**, Ramon III L. **(Region VII) - SIQUIJOR-ENRIQUE, SIQUIJOR: AMPONG**, Vilmo V.; **EDAYAN**, Roland G.; **YEE**, Ernesto S. **BORBON-TABOGON, CEBU: BORDALBA**, Cesar P.; **ESPINA**, Hernani A.; **LARROBIS**, Dennis C.; **PITA**, Alberto C.; **MALABUYOC-GINATILAN-ALEGRIA, CEBU: DACUMOS**, Joshua Noel; **LARROBIS**, Dennis C.; **PITA**, Alberto C.; **REYES**, Romeo R.; **MOALBOAL-BADIAN-ALCANTARA, CEBU: ABAD**, Christine M.; **DACUMOS**, Joshua Noel; **GARCIANO**, Allan Francisco S.; **LARROBIS**, Dennis C.; **PITA**, Alberto C.; **URBIZTONDO**, Rodrigo L. **(Region VIII) - MALITBOG-TOMAS OPPUS, SOUTHERN LEYTE: BAGUNAS**, Junery M.; **ESTRELLER**, Efigenia N.; **OTADOY**, Eusebio Jr. I.; **YU**, Girlie B. **PAMBUJAN-SILVINO LOBOS, NORHTERN SAMAR: CHIN**, Elino C.; **LLUZ**, Leopoldo C.; **POTOT**, Eduardo N. ; **ROSADIÑO**, Armando J. **MOTIONG-JIABONG-SAN JOSE DE BUAN, SAMAR: BAGUNAS**, Junery M.; **MERCADO**, Lolita R.; **PADAYAO**, Renato B. **STO. NIÑO-ALMAGRO-TAGAPUL-AN, SAMAR: CLEMENS**, Myrna M.; **MAGLANA**, Felipe Jr. B.; **MARTIRES**, Melinda C.; **PABILONA**, Ma. Luz L. **STA. MARGARITA-TARANGNAN-PAGSANJAN, SAMAR: CLEMENS**, Myrna M.; **DUQUILLA**, Zacarias E.; **MAGLANA**, Felipe Jr. B.; **MARTIRES**, Melinda C.; **MERCADO**, Lolita R.; **NAVAL**, Carmelita M.; **PABILONA**, Ma. Luz L.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than March 16, 2007.

March 06, 2007.

(Sgd.) **MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA**
Clerk of Court &
Ex-Officio Secretary

(PDI - March 7, 2007)



THE MUNTINLUPA CITY HALL: Where drug users fear to tread. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Waving the drug-free banner

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN MUNTINLUPA, ONE CAN TELL IF a workplace is drug-free by a bright yellow banner hanging in front of it, like the one seen at City Hall.

The Muntinlupa City Hall was declared a drug-free workplace last year by the Dangerous Drugs Board, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Muntinlupa police.

To keep it that way, the local government conducts annual mandatory drug tests for its 4,000 employees.

It also requires applicants to undergo the same test to ensure that no drug user would be able to join its ranks.

Recently, workers assigned to the different departments in City Hall such as the engineering department, city veterinary, youth affairs and sports development office, general services, public order and safety office and the Muntinlupa Renewal Home underwent drug testing, according to Chito Valerio, head of the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Office (Dapco).

From March 2006 to January this year, six of the 316 City Hall employees who were tested were found positive for illegal substances.

Supt. Edgar Ferraper, Muntinlupa deputy police chief who also heads the city's drug enforcement unit, said these workers usually undergo counseling, treatment and rehabilitation.

Some, however, choose to resign from their posts, he added.

Ferraper said other areas in the city such as the different communities, schools and workplaces are also under constant monitoring to ensure that these are free from the influence of drugs.

"For example, we monitor suspected drug-infested communities and if we find them to be free of drug users, we put up a banner declaring them drug-free," Ferraper said.

Stickers bearing the words "Drug-free" are also posted on the gates of houses in a bid to promote a positive attitude toward fighting drugs among residents, the police official added.

Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said his administration would continue to enforce mandatory drug testing to achieve the goal of becoming the first drug-free city by 2010.

Among the areas, workplaces and schools that have been declared drug-free by Dapco, apart from City Hall, are Highway Homes in Alabang, Tinig ng Pagkakaisa in Bayanan, and the Muntinlupa Science High School.

Alleged illegal recruiter shot dead

By Tina G. Santos

AN ALLEGED ILLEGAL RECRUITER who tried to elude arrest was killed in an entrapment operation conducted by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation Monday afternoon in Quezon City.

Head agent Allan Contado of the NBI-Intelligence Special Operations Division (ISOD) said Mar Vargas, 50, of San Juan, Manila, was shot when he tried to run over one of the agents with his car in an attempt to escape.

Vargas died while undergoing treatment at the Quirino Memorial Hospital where he was rushed with a gunshot wound in the head, the NBI said.

Another suspect, Ranil Terania, was arrested by NBI agents; while the other, Maribel Baniqued, managed to escape.

Contado said he dispatched four NBI-ISOD agents around 4 p.m. Monday for an entrapment operation and to serve a warrant of arrest against Baniqued, a suspected large-scale illegal recruiter.

He said NBI agents initially went to SM Megamall where the entrapment was supposed to take place. But Baniqued changed the venue and instead instructed the complainants to proceed to the Makro store in Cubao, Quezon City.

The complainants were met by Vargas and Terania who were apparently sent by Baniqued, who was on a separate vehicle, to receive the money.

Contado said the suspects, who did not get out of their vehicle, sped off when the agents tried to apprehend them as soon as they received the marked money.

Vargas, who was behind the wheel, sideswiped NBI agent Jun Abrazaldo and knocked him to the ground. This prompted Abrazaldo to draw his gun and fire at the suspects' vehicle, and in the process, hit Vargas in the head.

Bridge . . .

From page A21

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority earlier announced alternate routes in the area to make way for the repair of the bridge, possibly until the end of the year.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan said that aside from the Tullahan Bridge, Ayala and Jones bridges in Manila and Guadalupe Bridge in Makati City also need to undergo rehabilitation.

According to the MMDA, the bridges must to be repaired immediately because their steel parts were already corroded.

Work has already begun on the northbound lane of Ayala Bridge. It is expected to be completed in three weeks while the repair of the southbound lane will be completed in April, the DPWH also said in a statement.

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Burglarized

THREE burglars entered the house of Gidget Muñoz, sister of INQUIRER reporter Jerry Esplanada and made off with more than P400,000 in cash, jewelry and other valuables at dawn yesterday. Muñoz said she and the children were sleeping when the armed men entered their house on Tangonan St., Napocor Village in Quezon City.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Relocated

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue's District Office in Marikina City (RDO No. 45) has moved to the SNC Antipolo Trading Corp. building at 88 Marcos Highway, Barangay Mayamot in Antipolo City. Revenue District Officer Jonas DP Amora said the move was part of the BIR's thrust to improve taxpayer services by providing world-class facilities.

Melgarejo; 73

JOVITA Dimacuha Melgarejo passed away on March 2. She is survived by her brother Tomas and sisters Antonia and Bienvinida; sons and daughters Pepito and Ruby, Rey and Edith Jr., Bang, Ila and Marlon, Atoy and Babes, Marlon and Marie, Ritchi and Jhet and Joyous and Winnie. Her body is at the family residence in Sampaga West, Batangas City. Interment will be on March 10 at the Eternal Gardens in Alangilan, Batangas City after a 3 p.m. Mass at the Basilica Church.

A huge chunk of the Earth's crust missing

LONDON—A TEAM OF BRITISH scientists set sail on Monday to examine why a huge chunk of the earth's crust is missing, deep under the Atlantic Ocean—a phenomenon that challenges conventional ideas about how the earth works.

The 20-strong team aims to survey an area some 3,000 to 4,000 meters deep where the mantle—the deep interior of the earth normally covered by a crust kilometers thick—is exposed on the sea floor.

Experts describe the hole along the mid-Atlantic ridge as an "open wound" on the ocean floor that has puzzled scientists for the five or so years that its existence has been known because it defies existing tectonic plate theories of evolution.

"We know so little about it," said Bramley Murton, a senior research scientist at Southampton's National Oceanography Center.

"It's a real challenge to our established understanding of what the earth's surface looks like underneath the waves," he told Reuters by telephone from the brand new, hi-tech British research ship RRS James Cook.

Mid-ocean ridges are places where new oceanic crust is born, with red-hot lava spewing out along the seafloor.

What scientists are keen to know is whether the crust was ripped away by huge geological faults, or whether it never even developed in the first place.

The primary motivation for the project was to understand how the earth continues to evolve. *Reuters*

Taiwan test-fires cruise missile capable of striking rival China

TAIPEI—TAIWAN HAS TEST-fired a cruise missile capable of hitting rival China, it was reported Tuesday, amid fresh tensions across the region.

The Hsiung-feng 2E (Brave Wind) cruise missile, currently capable of a range of 600 kilometers, was test-fired at the southern Chiupeng missile base on Feb. 2, the United Daily News reported, citing a military source.

The missile could be fired from land bases, airplanes or warships and has the ability to hit Shanghai or Hong Kong, the paper said, and its range could be increased to 1,000 km. The defense ministry declined to comment on the report.

The report comes as tensions across the Taiwan straight have risen after President Chen Shui-bian pledged to push for independence and a new constitution earlier this week.

Chen told the pro-independence group Formosan Association for Public Affairs Sunday: "I want to say this again, 'four wants, one no.' That is, Taiwan wants independence, Taiwan wants to change its name, Taiwan wants a new constitution, Taiwan wants development." "There is no such problem as left and right in the path of development but there is only the problem of independence and reunification," said Chen.

Chen, defense minister Lee Jye and another senior politician from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) witnessed the missile test, the report said without identifying sources.

"Some DPP legislators said they believe the (missile) deterrent had given President Chen confidence in saying 'four wants, one no,'" the report said, without naming sources.

Chen's comments appeared to mark a shift in policy that is certain to irk China—which regards Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary—and also drew criticism from the United States, wary of the risk of conflict.

Su Shuyan, a Chinese military representative in parliament, told reporters at the opening of the annual session of the National People's Congress: "We absolutely won't allow Taiwan to break away from China … if Chen follows up his words with action, the People's Liberation Army can't just ignore it." Washington called Chen's latest pledge to push for independence "unhelpful" and reiterated its stance against independence for the island.

Taiwan has produced three prototypes of a cruise missile which could be used to strike the east coast of China, Jane's Defense Weekly has said.

In an article in 2006, the authoritative weekly said Taiwan plans to produce 50 of the Hsiung Feng 2E missiles before 2010 and up to 500 after 2010.

China has repeatedly threatened to invade Taiwan should it declare formal independence, prompting the island to seek more advanced weaponry to defend itself. *AFP*

AN IRAQI boy mounts a pile of burnt books amid the rubble of Baghdad's oldest book market, ripped by a car bomb attack the day before, killing 30 people, setting shops ablaze and leaving body parts scattered across the symbolic heart of Iraq's intellectual life. AFP

Baghdad book market bombing kills 30

BAGHDAD—A CAR BOMB ripped through Baghdad's oldest book market on Monday, killing 30 people, setting shops ablaze and leaving body parts scattered across the symbolic heart of Iraq's intellectual life.

At least 65 people were also wounded in the powerful blast on Mutanabi Street, an ancient center of learning and culture and a rare pleasure for the capital's war-weary citizens, a security official said.

Many shops packed with books caught fire and the market was littered with blood-splattered pages after the attack, the latest assault on a US-Iraqi plan aimed at stemming bloodshed in the capital.

By nightfall, thick black smoke which had earlier stained the blue spring skies over the Tigris was still billowing from the site of the blast.

One witness, Mohammed Salman, was searching for his brother.

"I hope he's in the hospital," Salman said. "There are many body parts all around. It is impossible to identify them." According to Salman, the bomb exploded right outside a cultural center where many people had gathered as usual to discuss politics and literature.

Bookstore owner Naim al-Shatry was in tears.

"The killing of books is worse than the killing of people because people have only limited life whereas books live forever," he said.

"The terrorists are trying to kill knowledge," he added. "Today they have killed the books in our oldest market." Another witness, who would not be named, said Al-Mutanabi was famed throughout the world.

"It has been a place where many of our Arab and foreign friends come to visit. Now it is destroyed." Another bookstore owner, Mohammed Hamid, was distraught.

"My library is destroyed completely," he said. "I had so many encyclopedias and historical books but they are all destroyed." Iraqis regard Al-Mutanabi, crammed with bookshops and frequented by writers, poets and artists, as one of the most important centers in the literary world.

It was opened in 1932 by King Faisal II, and is named after Arab poet Abu Taib al-Mutanabi.

The blast came despite a massive Iraqi-US security operation involving more than 90,000 troops, launched just over two weeks ago and aimed at quelling sectarian violence that has ravaged Baghdad for more than a year.

As part of the operation, hundreds of Iraqi and US troops are conducting search operations in Sadr City, once a no-go zone controlled by Shiite militias that has been the scene of running streetbattles.

The house-to-house searches are testing the resolve of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to back US-led forces in going after militants in the stronghold of one of his allies, radical anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Sadr's militiamen have disappeared into the shadows since the joint operation to flush out Sunni insurgents and Shiite militiamen.

The operation in Sadr City, which on its first day on Sunday drew no resistance but also saw no arrests, is sweeping through the same streets where US-led forces engaged Shiite militias in bitter battles in 2004.

Iraqi and coalition forces caught 36 suspected terrorists in raids around Iraq on Monday, the US military said.

The number two US commander in Iraq however warned that the security crackdown in Baghdad is a long-term operation that will take at least six to nine months to hand security over to Iraqis.

"We're starting to see some progress, but it's very slow," Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno told CNN television. "We expect it to be because we think this will take months, not weeks, to accomplish." *AFP*

Metal thefts in Japan surging

TOKYO—CHILDREN'S SLIDES, INcense holders from cemeteries and even the roof of a public toilet have disappeared in a spate of metal robberies in Japan prompted by surging steel and copper prices.

Last year, there were about 5,700 such robberies in Japan causing damages worth some 2 billion yen ($17.27 million), and the number of cases is rising, media reports said citing the National Police Agency.

There were four incidents of metals robberies on Sunday alone, including the theft of 550 kg of copper wire worth some 330,000 yen in Gifu prefecture, central Japan, media said.

Last month, thieves stole two stainless steel slides from parks in Saitama prefecture neighboring Tokyo.

"There were bolts scattered around the area, and the steps for the slides were left behind," a town official said.

"We don't know how heavy they were, but I think it must have taken at least two people to take them away," he added.

Industry officials believe the metal was stolen to be sold as scrap to China, feeding a construction boom as Beijing prepares to host the 2008 Olympics.

An official at the Japan Iron and Steel Recycling Institute said demand for scrap metal was strong both on the domestic market and overseas markets in China, South Korea and Taiwan.

"With metals prices at levels where they are now, I think we will probably continue to see thefts of these kinds," the official said.

"After all, you cannot have somebody guarding all public places around the clock," he added.

Some 200 stainless steel containers to hold burning incense were stolen from a cemetery in Kanagawa prefecture, south of Tokyo, in late February.

"We are still making checks about damages … but nothing like this has ever happened before," a cemetery official said.

Japan's crime rate is among the lowest in Asia.

Thieves have also targeted copper, a metal with a wide range of uses including construction, transport and power industries. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Iraq bombs kill 9 US soldiers

BAGHDAD—Nine US soldiers died in explosions north of Baghdad, the military said Tuesday. All nine were assigned to Task Force Lightning and died Monday in two separate incidents in the provinces of Salahuddin and Diyala. Six soldiers were killed when a bomb exploded near their vehicles during a combat operation in Salahuddin, the military said in a statement. Three other soldiers were wounded and transported to an American military hospital for treatment, it said. In another incident the same day, three more soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in Diyala, another statement said. One soldier was wounded. Monday was the deadliest day for US troops in Iraq since Feb. 7, when 11 Americans were killed—seven when their helicopter was shot down north of Fallujah and four others in combat operations. *AP*

Cheney treated for blood clot

WASHINGTON—US Vice President Dick Cheney, who has suffered four heart attacks, sought medical attention Monday for a blood clot in his left leg and will have to take blood-thinning medication for months, his office said. "The Vice President experienced mild calf discomfort today. In light of his recent prolonged air travel, he visited his doctor's office" in the afternoon, said spokesperson Megan McGinn. "An ultrasound revealed a deep venous thrombosis (DVT) or 'blood clot' in his left lower leg. His doctors will treat him with blood-thinning medication for several months. The vice president has returned to the White House to resume his schedule," McGinn said in a statement. *AFP*

US strike kills 9 Afghan civilians

KABUL—Nine Afghans were killed when US-led coalition warplanes bombed their home, officials said Monday, as Nato civilians were accused of shooting dead a civilian in the southern city of Kandahar. The deaths came as the coalition investigated Afghan government charges that its troops killed up to 10 civilians in gunfire after a suicide blast on Sunday, in an incident which drew condemnation from President Hamid Karzai. Five women and three children were among the nine people killed when foreign forces used bombs to respond to a rocket attack on a base in Kapisa province just north of Kabul, deputy provincial governor Sayed Daud Hashimi told AFP. *AFP*

Britons kidnapped in Ethiopia

LONDON—Britain voiced alarm Monday over the fate of kidnapped embassy staffers in Ethiopia and vowed to do everything to secure their release, amid reports that special forces were on standby. While London refused to comment on a report that crack troops were already in the region ready to release the captives, a defense source told AFP that "all options" remain open. A team of British diplomats arrived at the remote kidnap site in northeastern Ethiopia and discovered three bullet-scarred vehicles, one with diplomatic plates. The missing group were kidnapped last Thursday while on a tourist trip to the Afar desert region near the Eritrean border, according to the Ethiopian state news agency. *AFP*

Thai junta takes over TV station

BANGKOK—Thailand's military-installed government took over the country's only independent television station Tuesday and said it would be temporarily pulled off the air after it failed to pay millions of dollars in unpaid license fees. The takeover was expected after the government announced last week it would terminate iTV's license on Tuesday—the deadline for paying nearly 100 billion baht ($3 billion) in fines, unpaid broadcasting license fees and interest. Dhipavadee Meksawan, a minister in the prime minister's office, told reporters the station would be shut starting Wednesday but could resume broadcasts as early as Friday if government legal experts could resolve legal issues for the transition to new ownership. She said the network would be managed by the government's Public Relations Department until a new operator is hired. ITV—which stands for Independent TV—was once controlled by Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister ousted in a September coup. *AP*

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2 strong quakes jolt Indonesia; 70 killed

PADANG, INDONESIA—TWO STRONG EARTHquakes hit Indonesia's Sumatra island on Tuesday, killing at least 70 people and sending emergency operations into full swing to deal with dozens of injured.

The tremors were felt as far away as Malaysia and Singapore, where several buildings were evacuated.

The first quake of magnitude 6.3 was felt in the West Sumatra provincial capital of Padang at around 11 a.m., sparking panic among seaside residents who feared it might trigger a tsunami.

A second 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck the same area two hours later, causing more panic.

However, there was no immediate tsunami warning after the quakes, which were on land.

Indonesia's cabinet secretary Sudi Silalahi said 70 people had been killed.

The United States Geological Survey said the first quake's epicenter was around 420 km from Singapore. The Indonesian national quake center measured the quake at 5.8 on the Richter scale.

Some buildings collapsed and several homes and other buildings were badly damaged by the tremors that sent several people scrambling for safety, including 200-300 patients who ran out of a hospital in Padang, a Reuters witness said.

Citing reports from regencies the mayor of Padang, Fauzi Bahar, said 14 people had died in Solok town, 40 km northeast of Padang, 16 in Batusangkar and one in Payakumbuh.

"Many have calmed down and are returning home, but we can still see some traffic jams around the city," Bahar told Reuters.

"The numbers may increase, not every area provided the report." The mayor of Solok said hospitals were overwhelmed with dozens of injured.

"Our priority is to handle the injured ones, including their families. We have set up six tents at a soccer field as emergency posts," Syamsu Rahim, the mayor of Solok, told Reuters.

Padang is one of the few Indonesian cities where a tsunami warning system is in place. A quake in the Indian Ocean off Sumatra island in December 2004 and the tsunami it caused left about 170,000 people dead or missing in Indonesia's northern Aceh province.

"It was really strong. I panicked, I ran out of the house just like the other neighbors," housewife Asmiarti, whose home is on the northern Padang shore, told Reuters by phone.

"When we got out, our bodies were still shaking and the trees were also shaking. We fear there would be a tsunami but there has been no announcement so far," she said.

Earthquakes are frequent in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country. Its 17,000 islands sprawl along a belt of intense volcanic and seismic activity, part of what is called the "Pacific Ring of Fire." In March 2005, a powerful earthquake devastated Nias island, off the west coast of northern Sumatra, killing hundreds of people and leaving tens of thousands homeless.

A Reuters witness said Padang residents tried to reach higher places and their vehicles crowded main streets, triggering congested traffic across the city.

Callers told a Jakarta-based radio station that residents in several West Sumatra towns ran out of their houses when the quake was first felt.

Tall buildings in Singapore's business district swayed slightly, occupants said, and the tremor was also felt in other parts of the island.

Traders said there was little or no impact on financial markets trading.

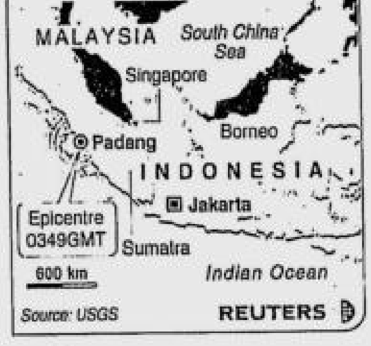
The tremor was also felt in west coast areas of Malaysia, the meteorological office in that country said.

Reuters

INDONESIA QUAKE

A 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's West Sumatra area on Tuesday, two hours after a 6.3 quake hit the same area which was felt in Singapore and Malaysia

At least nine people have died says a local radio report



Source: USGS REUTERS

China condemns use of sex slaves by Japanese military

BEIJING—CHINA CONDEMNED the Japanese military's use of Asian women as sex slaves during World War II and urged Tokyo on Tuesday to take responsibility for its actions.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing denounced the use of so-called "comfort women" as "one of the serious crimes committed by Japanese militarists during the second World War."

"This is a historical fact," Li told a press conference during China's annual legislative session. The Japanese government "should stand up to this part of history, take responsibility and seriously view and properly handle this issue," he said.

Li's remarks were the first Chinese reaction to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's disavowal last week of his country's responsibility for forcing Asian women into military brothels for Japanese troops during the war, saying there was "no evidence to prove there was coercion."

Prominent Japanese scholars and politicians routinely deny direct military involvement or the use of force in rounding up the women, blaming private contractors for any abuses.

Abe's statement triggered international outrage and contradicted evidence in Japanese documents unearthed in 1992 that showed that military authorities worked with contractors to forcibly procure about 200,000 women—mostly from Korea and China—for the brothels.

The remark also cast doubt on a 1993 Japanese government apology to the sex slaves issued by then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono.

Kono's 1993 statement also acknowledged that many women were forced into prostitution, and that the military government was involved in some cases.

The government followed Kono's statement in 1995 by setting up a fund to meet victims' compensation demands. But the fund, which is due to expire on March 31, is based on private donations and has been attacked as a government ruse to avoid owning up to the abuse.

Last month, US lawmakers introduced a nonbinding resolution urging Japan to apologize formally. Japan objected to the resolution, and said its leaders have apologized repeatedly.

On Monday, Abe remained firm on his stance that Tokyo should not issue another apology, telling Japan's parliament that none of the testimony in hearings by the US House of Representatives offered any solid proof of abuse.

"We will not apologize even if there's a resolution," Abe told lawmakers.

AP

US concerned over increase in Chinese military spending

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE ON Monday expressed concern about China's announced increase in military spending and warned it was "inconsistent" with Beijing's policy of peaceful development.

"This kind of spending not only concerns us but raises concerns among China's neighbors. This is inconsistent with China's policy of peaceful development," said national security spokesperson Gordon Johndroe.

"We hope they will demonstrate more transparency in the future," Johndroe told AFP by telephone.

He declined to elaborate, but US officials in the past have said that it is unlikely that China's declared military budget accurately represents their actual defense spending.

Johndroe's comments came after Beijing announced a nearly 20 percent increase in defense expenditures in 2007.

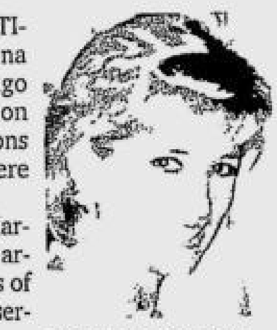
And Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said Monday that China would continue to strengthen its armed forces, remarks applauded by military leaders who want to counter new threats and take back Taiwan.

Wen made the pledge while addressing nearly 3,000 lawmakers a day after the Chinese government announced the biggest increase in its military budget in recent years.

Spending in 2007 will rise 17.8 percent from last year to 350.9 billion yuan (about $45 billion), it said.

AFP

British judge casts doubt on Diana murder theory



PRINCESS DIANA

LONDON—THE JUDGE INVESTIGATING the death of Princess Diana in a Paris car crash 10 years ago challenged Mohamed al Fayed on Monday to back up his allegations that she and his son Dodi were murdered.

Fayed, owner of the luxury Harrods department store, has long argued that the couple were victims of a plot hatched by British security services.

In a dramatic clash with Fayed's lawyers at a preliminary hearing into their deaths, coroner Elizabeth Butler-Sloss said:

"It would be enormously helpful to me if I had some evidence from Mr. Al Fayed's team to support the allegations.

"There are a large number of serious allegations being made … there is not a shred of evidence given to me about these allegations," she said. "If there is no evidence to support them, I shall not present them to the jury." Fayed's lawyer, Michael Mansfield, called for Diana's ex-husband Prince Charles and his father the Duke of Edinburgh to be called as "witnesses of relevance" during the inquest, a move likely to be strongly resisted by lawyers for the royal family.

Diana, 36, Dodi, 42, and their chauffeur were killed when their Mercedes limousine smashed into a pillar in a Paris road tunnel as they sped away from the Ritz Hotel, pursued by paparazzi on motorbikes.

Mansfield also said Diana had premonitions and expressed fears about her safety. He had up to 18 witnesses to prove this, he said.

"It is clear she had fears," Butler-Sloss told the court crammed with reporters from around the globe, highlighting how great the interest still is in the "People's Princess." A three-year British police investigation found last year that the crash was an accident and not part of a murder plot as Fayed claims.

The British inquiry backed a French probe which concluded that chauffeur Henri Paul, acting head of security at the Ritz which is owned by Fayed, was to blame because he was drunk, under the influence of antidepressants and driving too fast.

Fayed has rejected both British and French findings.

The inquest has taken a decade to come to court as Britain had to wait for the French legal process to be exhausted and then for the British police investigation to run its course.

Last week Fayed won a major legal challenge after High Court judges ruled that the inquest should be heard before a jury and not by Butler-Sloss sitting alone.

Appeal court judge Janet Smith, handing out the ruling, said: "Mr. Al Fayed has alleged that the Duke of Edinburgh and the Security Services conspired to kill the princess and Dodi Al Fayed. The allegation must be inquired into." *Reuters*

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WORLD 8-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Reyes, Alcano reach final 16

ALCANO: Easy win

HALL OF FAMER EFREN "BATA" REYES AND REIGNING WORLD 9-BALL champion Ronnie Alcano took the short route to the last 16 of the 3rd World 8-Ball Championship at the Al Bashton Hall in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, yesterday.

Reyes whipped overseas Filipino worker James Al Ortega, 10-2, while Alcano followed suit by dumping 2003 World Pool champion Thorsten Hohmann of Germany, 10-3.

Another OFW, Joven Bustamante—not related to Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who was incidentally booted out—also made it to the last 16 following a 10-7 victory over Farhard Shevardi of Iran.

Django suffered a heartbreaking loss to European champion Thomas Engert of Germany, 10-9.

Ahead, 9-8, Django had the break, but missed the 8 ball that would have given him the victory.

Engert took the rack and then ran out the next to duplicate his conquest of Django in the 2006 World 9 Ball Pool Championships in Manila and join the three Filipinos in the last 16.

It was the third straight win for the 52-year-old Reyes, who beat Rizandro Arrieta of Venezuela, 8-2, late Saturday and Bashar Hussein of Qatar, 8-5, last Sunday in the Group stage, to boost his title-drive in the event he ruled in 2004.

Alcano also sustained his fine form,

REYES/ A26

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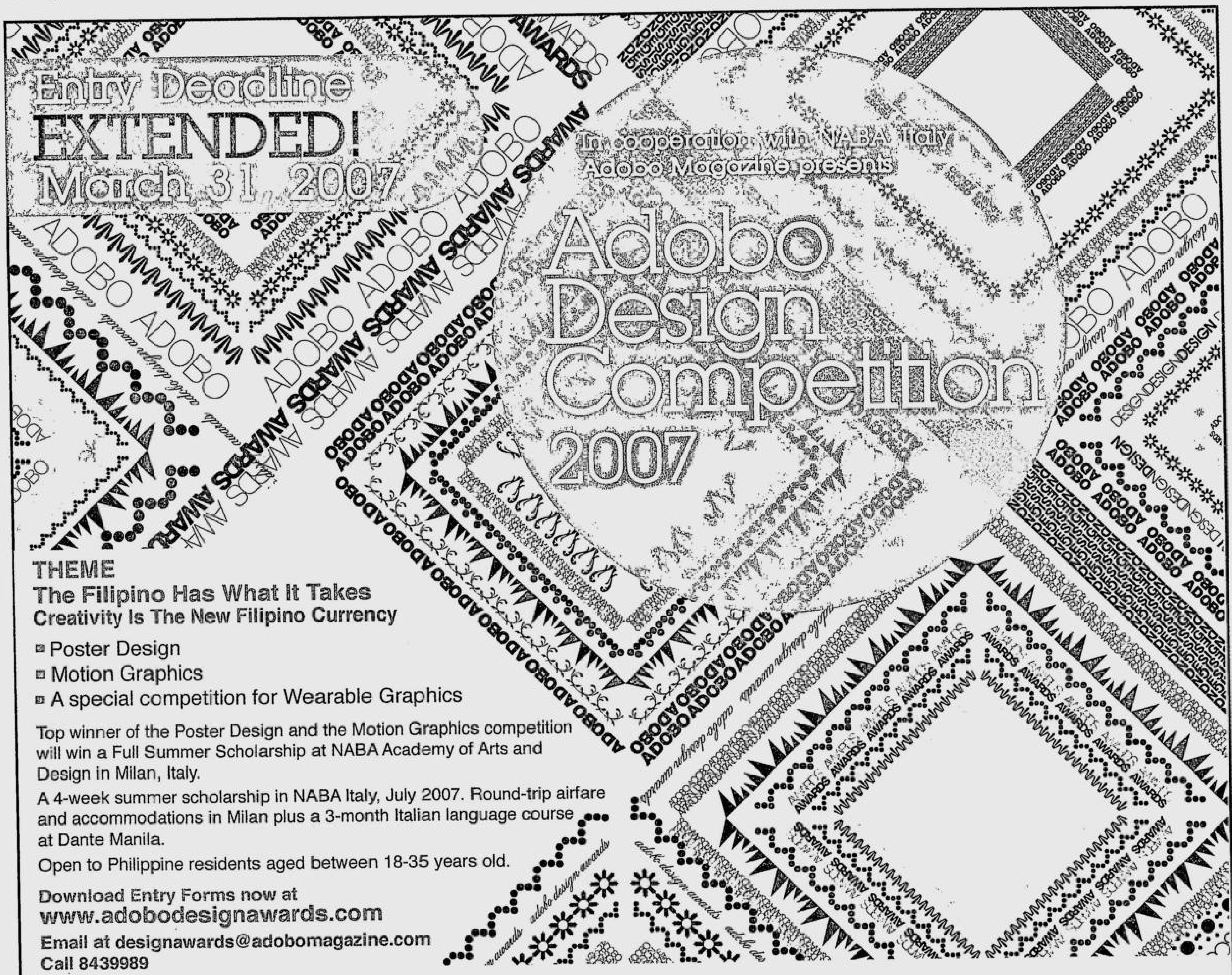

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DL Hoya man on Pacman cash: Nothing illegal

PACQUIAO: In the center of row

THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG IN GIVING MANNY PACquiao $250,000 in cold cash so he would sign up with the Golden Boy Promotions of boxing icon Oscar De La Hoya.

This was the retort issued by Richard Schaefer, GBP's chief executive officer, to a claim by Top Rank boss Bob Arum that there was "something illegal" in the transfer of money, stuffed in a suitcase, to Pacquiao.

"We would never engage in any illegal acts," said Schaefer. "If there is anyone who is accusing us of illegal acts, we will go after them in court to the full extent of the law."

The tug-of-war between GBP and Top Rank over the right to promote Pacquiao's fights took another twist last week when the Filipino boxing hero's American trainer, Freddie Roach, testified in court.

A report in the Los Angeles Times quoted Roach as saying he had learned from Pacquiao himself that De La Hoya's men handed over a suitcase stuffed with cash—12,500 pieces of $20 bills, to be exact—after the Filipino arrived at the Los Angeles Airport.

The exchange happened at a Beverly Hills steakhouse in September, the report said.

"What form of payment Manny Pacquiao received doesn't matter, as long as it's not an illegal action," Shaefer said. "And it wasn't."

The LA Times also quoted Arum as calling the Golden Boy-Pacquiao exchange "unprofessional and inappropriate."

"Come on, give me a break," said Arum, a lawyer. "What legitimate business is it when a person pays someone with 12,500 $20 bills in a suitcase?"

The newspaper reported that De La Hoya and Schaefer lured Pacquiao into signing a multi-fight contract with GBP by giving him $250,000 cash as a signing bonus.

The report said that Arum also gave Pacquiao $1 million when the American promoter travelled to the Philippines last December.

"Arum gave Manny $1 million cash right after Manny's [December] birthday," said Roach. "I don't know if it was wired to him, or given to him in person, but Manny told me when it happened, 'I got a million in cash.'"

Meanwhile, Pacquiao sparred for six rounds at Rey Golingan's Abap Gym in Gen. Santos City yesterday and reportedly looked good in training.

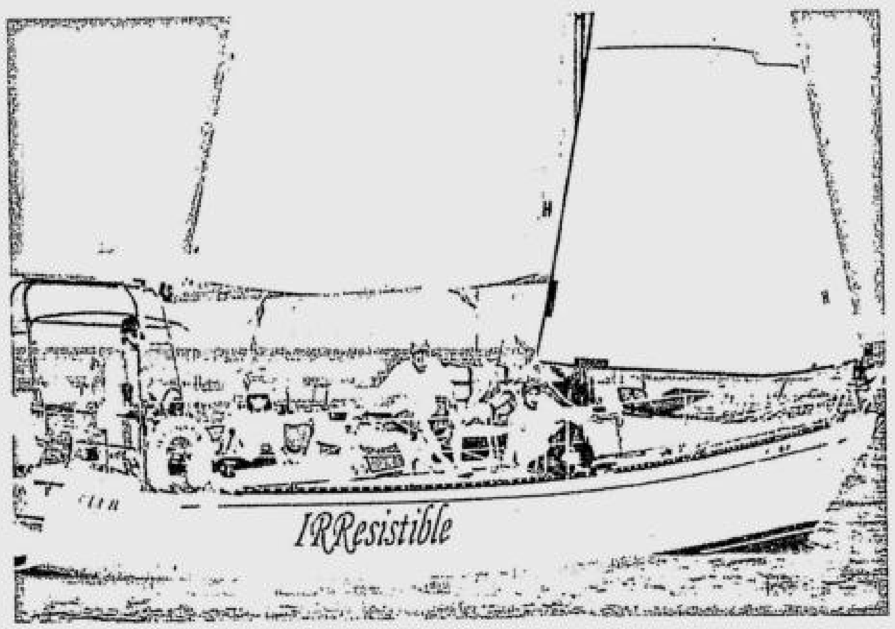
The pound-for-pound icon sparred for four rounds against Aaron Melgarejo, then did another two rounds with Davaoeno Jesar Ancajas.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

MANILA-BORACAY RACE

Irresistible posts upset

By Jasmine W. Payo



THE CREW of Irresistible waits for the announcement of their victory.

BORACAY—A LOCALLY MADE BOAT manned by a foreign crew pulled off a surprise victory over hotshot yachts as it captured the overall crown in the 5th e-Standard Insurance Manila to Boracay Race yesterday here in Aklan.

Irresistible, owned and skippered by Harry Taylor and DB Brizuela, also ruled the IRC 1 class to bag its first major victory in 41 hours, 34 minutes and seven seconds.

"It's the first time they came close to anything," said race committee official Martin Tanco. "Theoretically, the bigger the boat, the faster it is. But that's where the handicap system goes in. The way the winds worked also favored them."

Taylor banked on four other crew members to steer the two-decade old, Bataan-made S&S 36 upgraded two years ago.

The overall winner was determined through a set criteria that included the race time, length of the boat and size of the sail and mast.

It was only the second time that a similar small type of boat topped the 200-nautical mile sprint since Viking Express of Japan ruled the race's inaugural run.

The top four finishers in the IRC 1 class, composed mostly of smaller yachts, also claimed the top four spots in the final overall rankings.

Irresistible stole the spotlight from the favored Centennial, a multi-titled Sydney 46 yacht which ruled the race in 2005 and 2006.

Skippered by Ernesto Echauz, Centennial dominated the premier IRC Racing Class in 43:30:40 but mustered only a fifth-place in the overall standings.

Vivaldi, a J35 skippered by Claudio Altura, came in second to Irresistible both in the overall and IRC 1 divisions with a time of 43:03:14.

Altura turned to a seasoned crew that included former members and coaches of the national sailing team.

Arvin Simtoco and Seiji Kawakami of Hong Kong led Fast Exit, an X 99, to third-place finishes in the overall and IRC 1 class at 43:25:10.

Philippine-entry Sandoway skippered by Klass Huisjes registered only 10 seconds off Fast Exit at 43:25:20 to secure the fourth spot.

A total of 28 local and foreign yachts from Australia, Europe, North America, China, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong sailed off Manila Yacht Club on Saturday afternoon.

Participating yachts overcame shifty winds throughout the race that traversed through Corregidor, Nasugbu, Batangas, Verde Island Passage and Dumalit Point in Mindoro and Tablas Strait in Panay.

The event will be followed today by the 15th President's Cup Regatta, a competition that features inshore races in the pristine waters of Boracay Island.

Realtors take on Express; Phone Pals battle Aces

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Air21
7:20 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Alaska

STA. LUCIA COULD not ask for a more perfect opportunity.

With a new coach, a pruned-down field and a complete, star-studded lineup for the Fiesta Cup, the Realtors have, suddenly, found themselves from being big-time underachievers to the top favorites in the tournament.

Boyet Fernandez, the former hard-nosed guard whose entire career was practically spent with the Realtors, has now been given the task of steering this squad back to greatness.

The Realtors clash with Air21 in the 4:35 p.m. game scheduled at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, with the pressure on them since Sta. Lucia was just one of three teams left untouched by the National Team.

Powerhouse squads like San Miguel, Talk 'N Text and Barangay Ginebra have been left hobbled, to say the least, while teams like Sta. Lucia, newcomer Welcoat and Coca-Cola remained intact.

But the case of the Realtors is different.

Already with a powerhouse core, Sta. Lucia is expected to come out a better team, its super rookie Kelly Williams more mature and its desire to respond to the man calling the shots renewed.

Alfrancis Chua was made a consultant after management "decided to take a different direction," and this ended a four-year partnership that was filled with more heartaches than games won.

Rock Winston, who came as a substitute for the Realtors' original choice, Kris Smith, makes his PBA debut against tested Shawn Daniels, Air21's burly but very dependable reinforcement.

Talk 'N Text, meanwhile, parades JJ Sullinger when the Phone Pals clash with Alaska and veteran Rosell Ellis in the 7:20 p.m. game.

So shines again, but Tagaytay-RP falls to 2nd

Standings after six rounds:

18.5 points—Pavlodar (Kazakhstan); 16.5—Tagaytay (RP), Sapia (Iran); 14—Shanghai (China), Rah Ahan (Iran); 12.5—Damascus (Syria); 12—Calicut (India); 11.5—Sulimania (Iraq), Aleppo (Syria); 11.0—Tehran (Iran), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Amman (Jordan), Dubai (UAE), Tidewater (Iran), Sharjah (UAE); 10.5—Lahore (Pakistan); 9—Erbil (Iraq); 3—Jerusalem (Palestine) 3.

TEHRAN, IRAN—TEEN SENSATION WESLEY SO continued to shine as Tagaytay-RP keeps its title-retention bid going in the 15th Asian Cities Chess Team Championship at the Eram Grand Hotel here Monday.

The 13-year-old So scored back-to-back victories over veteran counterparts as the FIlipinos drew with third seed Sapia (Iran), 2-2, in the fifth round and whipped seventh seed Damascus (Syria), 3-1, in the sixth round to stay within sight of pacesetter Pavlodar (Kazakhstan).

Thus far, the Filipinos tote 16.5 points, two shy of the two-time champion Kazakhs' 18.5.

So beat fellow IM Morteza Mahjoob of Sapia and Talal Alzaim of Damascus to boost his record to five wins and one draw in the nine-round event.

IM Oliver Dimakiling racked up victories over IM Amir Mallahi of Saipa and Assad Albonni of Damascus to duplicate So's performance while manning board four.

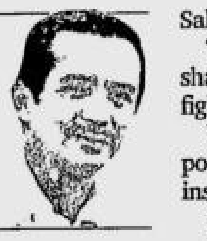
GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. yielded to fellow GM Elshan Moradiabadi of Sapia in the fifth round but subdued FM Samir Mohammad of Damascus on board two.

The only casualty for Tagaytay-RP turned out to be GM Mark Paragua, who stumbled against GM Ehsan Maghami Ghaem of Sapia and IM Imad Hakki of Damascus, respectively.

Tagaytay-RP will face No. 12 seed Calicut (India) in the seventh round.

WBO, one big step backward

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

BOX, DON'T RUN.

This remains the overwhelming people's call for Manny Pacquiao, the People's Champ.

Of course, this should not be taken to mean that Pacquiao tends to run from a fight.

Never. Running away is definitely not in Pacquiao's screaming fight vocabulary.

In fact, the Pacman is one of the bravest, if not the fiercest, boxing greats to come out of a busy, unforgiving Pinoy sweat shop.

But the call of the day is very clear: Don't jump in and join the silly political race.

This was the resounding message from those who sincerely cared for Pacquiao when he was booed (for the first time) during the Moment of Truth fight promotion at the Cebu Sports Complex on Feb. 24.

* * *

OK. But, come to think of it, how come these same fans were rendered mute and dumb after hometown bet Z Gorres was declared a split loser on points despite a scintillating stand against defending WBO super flyweight champion Fernando Montiel that same evening?

Your reporter here, who scored that WBO title fight at ringside, had Gorres the winner on points despite the drastic two points deducted from him by the over-eager referee in rounds 10th and 12th.

Sportsman Tony Aldeguer, who bankrolled the championship promotion, had to check the rebel in him and merely told the referee he won the fight for the badly beaten Mexican champ.

Eric Gomez of the Golden Boy Promotions openly declared that Gorres won clearly in his card.

* * *

You can bet nobody out there in the filled stands had expected the inexplicable ending.

Everybody must've felt greatly cheated.

Meanwhile, out there in his quiet Quezon City nest, lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud had tried to follow the progress of the Gorres title bid with the help of one friend at ringside.

Salud had been told Gorres was starting to dominate, winning seven of the first nine rounds.

However, the final text to Salud was brief, straight to the point: "*Nadaya*, Gorres got robbed!"

This was the prevailing feeling among fans and experts alike.

There were crying claims that a boxing robbery had been perpetrated by a Mexican band right in our backyard.

* * *

Salud, founding secretary general of the World Boxing Council, was on the phone Monday to assure fans they had every reason to feel confused about the fight result.

Without much hesitation, Salud offered the observation that Gorres was partly to blame for his failure to win the world crown.

Why? Because he did not do enough and left the final result in the hands of the judges, Salud explained.

That's hard to believe. Gorres appeared sharp and was scoring clearly for most of the fight, before fading in the final three rounds.

Yes, he was even very exciting at certain points, Salud said, but he often tarried and instead counted his lead.

How was that again?

Gorres would often pull back, release the accelerator, once he felt he had scored enough points in a round.

No, Salud continued, Gorres may never be able to score a stoppage the way Pacquiao did, but the call was to keep on punching, fight hard, no matter what.

* * *

Box, don't count, that's the core of the Salud sermon.

Well, Gorres could indeed be faulted for resorting to accounting, instead of strictly punching, out there.

However, Salud would not refute the ringside claim that the referee helped greatly in upturning the final result.

The second point deduction, in the 12th, when all Gorres did was clinch, was definitely unmerited, Salud said.

Gorres had to save himself from a knockout in the 10th and a draw, Salud maintained, would've have been a decent decision.

All told, the Moment of Truth ultimately turned into a moment of untruth.

And, strictly speaking, the conduct of the championship that tragic night was one big step backward in the bid by the World Boxing Organization (WBO) to legitimize itself and join the prizefight mainstream together with the WBC, WBA and IBF.

Reyes, Alcano reach last 16

From page A25

getting the jump on Hohmann, 3-0, before putting the outcome beyond doubt, 8-1, in the event using the alternate-break format.

Yen Makabenta, chair of the Billiard and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP), said Reyes held a slim 3-2 edge before taking away the next seven straight racks and the match.

Another Filipino standout, Dennis Orcollo, was battling Australian Ben Nunan at presstime.

Other round-of-32 matches saw upcoming Hisashi Kusano, 17, of Japan best Serge Das of Belgium, 10-8; and Sweden's Marcus Chamat oust another Japanese Satoshi Kawabata, 10-5.

Two other OFWs, Elvis Calasang and Joyme Vicente, are also battling in the round of 32.

Some of the ongoing matches pit Goran Mladenovic of Serbia and Montenegrovs opposite Jason Klatt of Canada; Filipino Lee Vann Corteza against Nick Van den Berg of the Netherlands, Ralf Souquet of Germany against Darren Appleton of Great Britain.

Monday was a rest day and the players were treated to a desert safari, including camel rides, followed by a taste of the Dubai nightlife. They returned to Fujairah yesterday for the round of 32.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Miggy Man (9), Know's West (8), Prince Ferdie (5), Getting Better (4), Memory of Fire (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Red Hot Water (7), West N Wild (3), Revelation/Mark's Rose (1), Head Turner (2), Strong Will (5)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—White Princess (9), Sweet Talk (1), Gold Money (5), Yanong Rikit (2), Batangas Force (10)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—From This Moment (8), Key Element (9), Sunline (10), Erica's Talent (5), Even Now (3)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Karma (1), Freedom Charger (12), Rockwell (11), Landed Visas (13), Lyanjonik (10)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Batang Bukid (7), Fine Offer (11), Hurry Prince (10), Dondon's Entry (1), Bom's Bom's 99)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Words of Joy (11), Advance Party (3), Blitzkrieg (4), Mister Cool (10), Smarty Joe (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Kate Alex (4), I Remain (13), Playing Cool (2), Gelay's Charm (1), Carlito's Way (7), Top Quest (9)

SPORTSWATCH

Fearless Fighting at Metrowalk Saturday

THE COUNTRY'S TOUGHEST RING GLADIATORS AND A SPRINKLING OF foreign fighters take center stage this weekend as they slug it out in the Fearless Fighting Championship (FFC), a night of brawl billed as "Relentless" at the Metrowalk complex in Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Saturday. Eleven matches, including the one between URCC bantamweight champion and SEA Games gold medalist Mark Sangiao and Guam fighter Freddy Cepeda, are on the roster. Fight time starts at 8 p.m. Admission is free. "The Sangiao-Cepeda clash is the fight to watch," said Alex Lopez, president and organizer of FFC, which is presented by the Ace Technologies. "Cepeda is coming off a knockout win in the Trench Wars in Saipan." Focus will also be on the Vicente Pajaro-Ernesto Yraita clash in the heavyweight division with both fighters debuting on the octagon arena. Yraita, a karateka who had served in the Iraqi army, is also out to flaunt his fighting skills and talent. Other featured matches, which will have five 5-minute rounds, pit Adrian Hilana against Razi Jabbari of Iran; Celso Gunda versus Bernard Dumar, Arie Zarco against Edward Kelly, and former top amateur boxer Jovan Presbeterio versus Joel Amurao.

Arcilla, 6 other netters post 2 straight wins

DEFENDING CHAMPION JOHNNY ARCILLA BLASTED JAPANESE MASAYA Taira, 6-0, 6-0, yesterday for his second straight win in the 2007 Kobe Gakuin Invitational Tennis Cup at the Ayala Alabang Country Club courts. Patrick John Tierro, Joseph Victorino, Elbert Anasta, Toto Joven, Rocky Paglalunan and wild card Francis Casey Alcantara also notched their second victories in the round-robin P100,000 event organized by former RP Davis Cupper Camoy Palahang. Tierro outclassed Junpei Okabe, 6-2, 6-2; Victorino clobbered Naoya Okamoto, 6-2, 6-0; Anasta defeated Naoki Miyake, 6-4, 6-3; Joven downed So Hanatani, 7-5, 6-2; Paglalunan outplayed Shimpei Moriguchi, 7-5, 7-5; and Alcantara trounced Yuji Natsume, 6-1, 6-0. Fuyuki Ogawa, the most veteran among the players from the visiting Kobe Gakuin University team handled by Palahang, rallied past Dodong Rubillar, 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Big-time derby at Las Piñas slated

A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN METRO MANILA COCKERS AND DERBY VETERans from Cavite, Laguna and Batangas sizzles at the Las Piñas Coliseum on March 17 via the "Summer Big-time" 5-cock derby. Ricky Valencia, a stalwart of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) and owner of the popular Scorpio entry, is hosting the event which stakes P1 million cash for an entry fee of P33,000. All entries must be submitted one day before the event, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910.

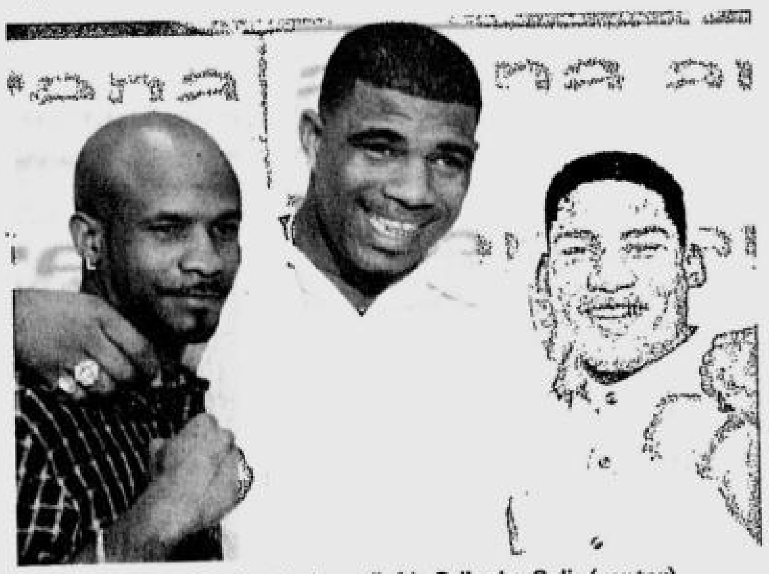
GCAP 5-cocker kicks off at SJC today

MORE THAN 70 FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby series starting at 5 p.m. at the San Juan Coliseum. Among those seeing action in the series sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 are Louie Cua, Otto Balboa, Max and Bebot Roxas, Jack Yap, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Totoy Haruta, Pol Estrellado, Romy Castro, Pepito Ngo, Boy de Roca, Gerry Ramos, Rudy Albano, Eric dela Rosa and Patrick Antonio.

Cocking Academy gets Thunderbird backing

THE TJT COCKING ACADEMY HAS RECEIVED THE BACKING OF THUNDERbird Power Feeds for its March 2007 classes on March 8 to 10 at the RHAMM Gamefarm, Alfonso, Cavite. Thunderbird, through product manager Francis Martinez, will provide logistical support and funding for the academy headed by Dr. Teddy Tanchangco. Those interested to attend the March batch may register by calling Dexter Guce at 0917-8807362 or 0917-8730204, Tanchanco at 0916-5742427 or 0920-9506492.

Cuba's Olympic champs defect



CUBAN boxers Yan Barthelemy (left), Odlanier Solis (center) and Yuriorkis Gamboa hope to find a new life fighting as professionals—away from their loved ones. AP

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA—THEY COULDN'T hide the tears when they spoke of leaving their families. Yet three Olympic champions who defected from Cuba are ready to begin new lives in a new country as professional boxers.

"We have a commitment with the people of Miami and the people of Cuba, it's true—to become world champions," flyweight Yan Barthelemy said in Spanish during the group's first official news conference since arriving in the United States on Friday.

Fans will have to wait a bit longer for their first pro fight because a two-month delay in obtaining US travel visas left the three fighters, "a little out of shape," according to their Miami-based manager, Tony Gonzalez.

"They've asked for about six weeks to train, so we're looking at around April 13," he said.

Odlanier Solis, a 26-year-old heavyweight; Yuriorkis Gamboa, a 25-year-old super bantamweight; and 27-year-old Barthelemy left their hotel while training in Venezuela for the upcoming Pan American Games and then crossed into Colombia.

There, they hit a snag in obtaining travel visas from the US government until they could prove they were not planning to permanently move to the United States and that they planned to reside in Germany.

Each fighter has signed a three-year contract for at least $1 million with Hamburg-based First Artist and Arena with an option for two more years, not counting purses, Gonzalez said. They planned to fly to Germany on Tuesday before returning to Miami for training.

Solis and Gamboa left behind young children.

"It was a hard decision. It may be months or years before we see them," a tearful Solis said. "But I believe in the end it will be best for them."

All three were favorites in their weight classes to repeat at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Gamboa said he sold his 2004 gold medal last year to pay for his 2-year-old daughter's first birthday party. It's not uncommon for Cuban Olympic athletes to sell their medals to earn cash to help their families, he added.

"You know things are hard in Cuba," Gamboa said. "I wanted to be able to give her the celebration she deserved as the daughter of a champion." *AP*

Viloria gets title crack after foe's suspension

LAS VEGAS—BRIAN VILORIA, A HAWAIIAN with Filipino roots, is set to fight Mexican Edgar Sosa for the vacant WBC light flyweight belt, which was stripped from Omar Niño-Romero for failing a drug test.

No details of the fight have been announced, but the winner between Viloria and Sosa will have to defend the title against Niño-Romero once the latter's suspension ends.

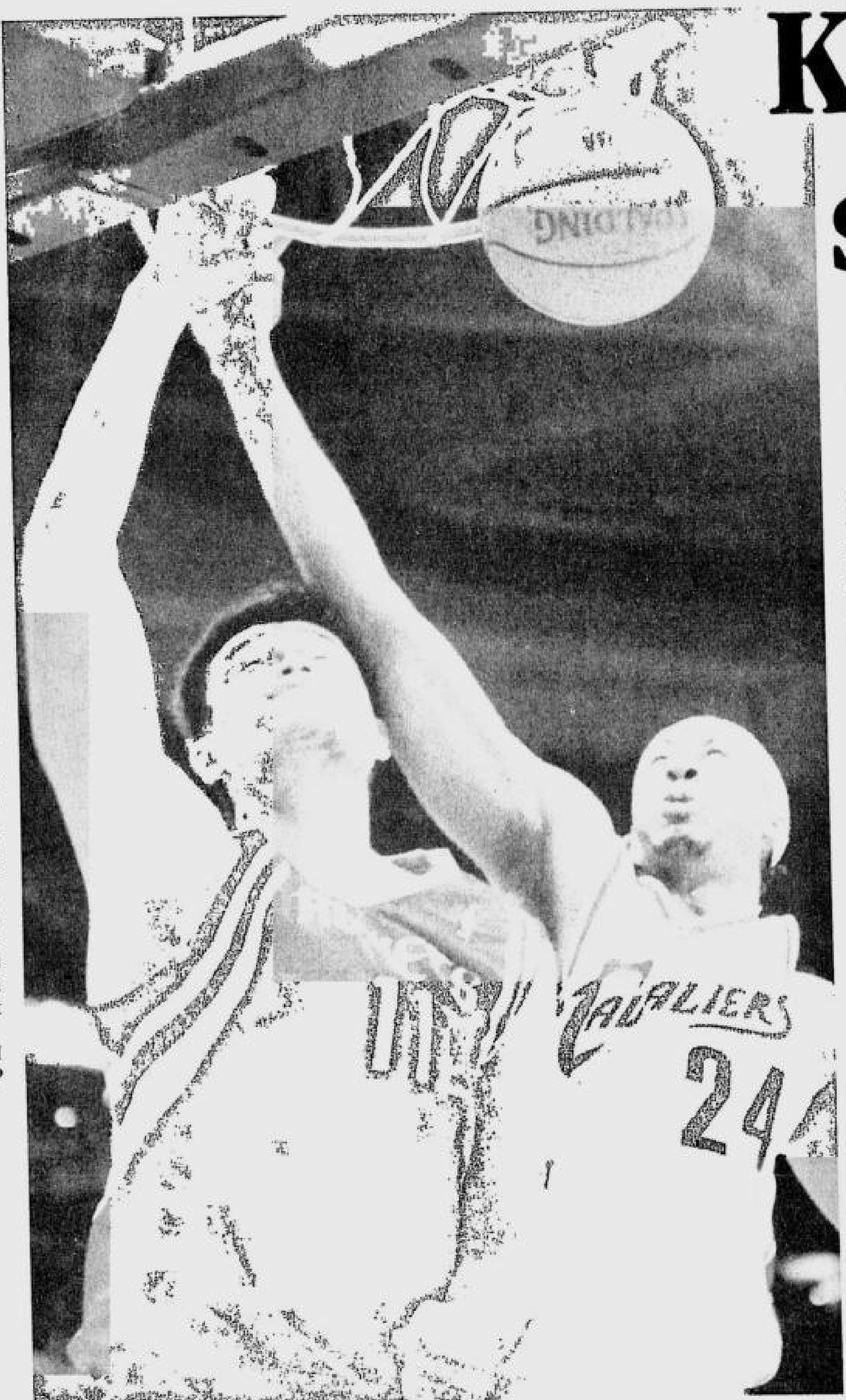
Niño-Romero was suspended for nine months and fined $18,750 Monday for testing positive for methamphetamine after a November bout.

The decision by regulators means the 30-year-old Mexican won't be able to fight in the United States during his suspension.

Niño-Romero's fine of 25 percent of his $75,000 purse came after his Nov. 18 majority draw against Viloria in Las Vegas that initially allowed him to retain the light flyweight title. The Nevada Athletic Commission also voided the majority draw and called the bout a no-decision.

Niño-Romero denied using the banned drug, which was detected by urinalysis. Methamphetamine can help fighters lose weight and acts as a stimulant in the ring. He is the first boxer in the history of the western state of Nevada to test positive for methamphetamine after a fight.

"I'm very, very sad at the decision, at what I went through," he said in Spanish. *AP*



RETURNING from a long, injury-induced layoff, the Huoston Rockets' Yao Ming (left) shakes off the rust and scores a crucial dunk in the fourth quarter against Donyell Marshall of the Cleveland Cavaliers. Yao spearheaded a fourth-quarter charge that, however, fell short. REUTERS

King James spoils Yao comeback

CLEVELAND, OHIO—CHINESE CENTER YAO Ming scored 16 points and grabbed 11 rebounds in his first game since December 23 but could not lift the Houston Rockets past LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

James produced game highs of 32 points and 12 rebounds to spark the Cavaliers past Houston 91-85 here Monday, stealing the thunder from the National Basketball Association return of 7-foot-6 Yao.

Five-time NBA All-Star Yao missed 32 games with a broken bone under his right knee and was understandably rusty in his return after 11 weeks of rehabilitation, hitting only 5-of-15 shots from the field in 27 minutes.

"I had one practice before and that helped but a game is different," Yao said. "I felt OK in the first quarter, but in the second and third quarters I was almost like a high school player on the court.

"The fourth quarter was a little bit better. The team played with high energy in the fourth quarter and I could feel the energy of my teammates and it helped me. I can't wait for the next game."

Yao also swatted aside a pair of shots and hit 6-of-8 free throws against the Cavaliers, against whom he scored 24 points in a December victory before his injury against the Los Angeles Clippers two days before Christmas.

Yao was having his best NBA season when he suffered the injury, averaging a career-high 26.8 points and 9.7 rebounds in 26 games.

"Uneven, which is to be expected," Houston coach Jeff Van Gundy said of Yao. "But he has to cut down on his turnovers."

In Miami, the Heat got above .500 for the first time in nearly four months as Eddie Jones had 14 of his season-high 21 points in the final quarter and Shaquille O'Neal added 14 points and nine rebounds on the eve of his 35th birthday to lead Miami to an 88-81 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Jason Richardson scored a season-high 29 points in front of his home fans, helping the Golden State Warriors end a six-game losing streak with a 111-93 trashing of the Detroit Pistons. The win also ended Golden State's seven-game road slide, and gave the Warriors a lopsided sweep of the season series. They beat Detroit 111-79 at home on Nov. 11.

In Orlando, Florida, Hedo Turkoglu had a season-high 25 points and Trevor Ariza added 20. as the Magic routed the Milwaukee Bucks, 99-81. Dwight Howard had 10 points and nine rebounds for the Magic. *AP, AFP*

GAMES TODAY (*Basketball TV*)

8 a.m.—Toronto vs Washington
(replay @ 6 p.m.)
11 a.m.—Indiana vs Sacramento
(replay @ 9:30 p.m.)

Federer, has record in his sight

INDIAN WELLS—TOP-RANKED ROGER FEDERER will try to stretch his 41-match win streak to the longest run in the Open era by capturing his fourth consecutive ATP Masters Series Indian Wells crown.

The Swiss star is five triumphs shy of matching Guillermo Vilas' 1977 win-streak record and a fourth consecutive title at the 3.285 million-dollar ATP event that begins here on Friday would take Federer's run to an unequalled 47.

"Hopefully I can win again and beat Vilas' record," Federer said. "Records are meant to be broken but if I don't it's all right. I will start all over again."

Federer, coming off his fourth title in five years at Dubai, last lost in August of last year to Britain's Andy Murray in the second round of the ATP Masters Series Cincinnati event.

Since then he has captured the US and Australian Open crowns and will attempt to complete a career Grand Slam in June's French Open final.

Maria Sharapova, the top-ranked defending champion, will lead the women's field in the $2.1-million event that opens here on Wednesday.

Sharapova will face either Swede Sofia Arvidsson or Dutch girl Michaella Krajicek after a first-round bye.

Federer went 92-5 last year, winning Wimbledon as well as the Australian and US Opens and four Masters Series events.

Federer's rivals will include second-ranked Rafael Nadal, the reigning French Open champion who beat Federer four times last year, plus 2006 Indian Wells runner-up James Blake. *AFP*

Escudero eyes PSC remodeling, urges more support for sports

SPORTS FINALLY FOUND A SPOT IN the electoral platform, with a senatorial candidate eyeing reforms that will give the country the highest spot on the Olympic podium.

ESCUDERO

Genuine Opposition (GO) candidate Francis "Chiz" Escudero yesterday said he would support calls to fix the terms of Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) appointees so as not to disrupt the programs aimed at ending the country's Olympic gold-medal drought.

Speaking before a crowd made up mostly of the youth in Quezon City, Escudero, a three-term congressman representing Sorsogon, also urged government to strengthen its support to sports and batted for wise and equitable spending in grassroots and elite programs.

"Sports is not among government's priorities," Escudero said. "But sports plays a big role in the development of our youth. And the discipline it instills on the youth makes good leaders and role models. Our athletes should be given the support they deserve."

"Oftentimes, we give them token incentives, and only after they've won. We should put our stake on them."

Escudero believes that reforms will have to start with the retooling of Republic Act 6847, the law that created the PSC in 1991.

"As it is, the PSC law needs a serious look," Escudero said. "The PSC used to receive at least P400 million a year, not enough to assure the country of an Olympic gold medal but would [still be enough] to [at least] provide our athletes with decent support."

"We are all looking forward to a Filipino athlete standing in the middle podium of the Olympics, yet it remains a dream," Escudero added. "But with serious support from government, like in all other countries serious about their sports programs, I am confident it could be done."

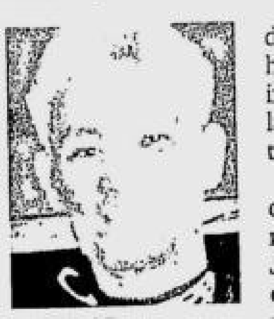
Escudero also cited the recent case of a coach who allegedly withdrew money from her athletes' automated teller machines (ATMs) to provide food for other athletes who do not yet receive allowances from the PSC.

Aguilar hopes to get back bike diadem

TEAM PHILIPPINES-NAMSSA HOPES TO RIDE high on the goals of its top two riders going into the 2007 Puerto Princesa City Motocross Masters of Asia FIM-UAM Asian Motocross Championships on March 24-25 at the motocross racetrack adjacent to the Puerto Princesa City Hall.

Glenn Aguilar tries to bounce back from a fifth place finish in last year's series to regain the Asian motocross diadem he won in 2004.

But with the emergence of new and equally talented foreign rivals, Aguilar knows he has to double up his efforts to emerge victorious.



AGUILAR

Kenneth San Andres, on the other hand, displayed vast improvement since last year and targets a top-five finish.

Joining them in the country's crusade for motocross glory are Junior 50 cc. Champion Patrick Orbe, Junior 65 cc. champion Jacob Orbe and Junior 85 titlist Jensen Manuel.

"Definitely, this will be a much tougher season," said Aguilar. "Although we have the hometown advantage, we expect the race to be even more unpredictable with more talented and competitive foreign riders joining the title hunt this year."

Among the foreign riders in the Asian 125 cast are New Zealand's James Robinson, China's Shi Lok and Shi Yu Men, Takuma Kojima of Japan, Jye Harvey of Australia, Aep Dadang Supriatna and Denny Orlando of Indonesia, and former Indonesian 85 stalwarts Aldi Lazaroni and Adi Aprian.

Hot Tamaraws sweep college badminton crowns

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY (FEU) gored the opposition in UAAP Season 69 badminton and swept the men's and women's crowns in convincing fashion at the Rizal Memorial Badminton Hall over the weekend.

The Tamaraws went unscathed in six men's matches to run away with their third title. They clobbered defending champion University of Santo Tomas (UST), 4-1, on the final day to complete the sweep and win for the second time since 2004.

The Lady Tamaraws nipped the Lady Maroons of University of the Philippines (UP), 3-2, to also sweep their way to their second title in three years.

The badminton competitions were the last on the Season 69 calendar. The awards night are scheduled March 25 at the University of the East Theater.

FEU also won the Most Valuable Player trophy in the men's side through Wilmer Frias as well as the Rookie of the Year honors through Andrei Babad.

It was very much the same in the women's contest where FEU's Chona Rivera was named MVP. Rochanie Decatoria of UST took the top rookie honor in the distaff side though.

Jubie Vallanta of Adamson and Frias were also chosen as the most improved players of the season.

"The sweep made this victory sweeter," said FEU coach Allan de Leon. "I would like to give credit to my players who showed determination and hard work."

Drawing huge games from national players Frias and Mark Alvin Natividad, FEU ripped UP, 4-1, Saturday to secure the title. Frias smashed Marlon Villarin, 21-10, 24-22, in the first singles, while Natividad beat Popper Bernadas, 21-11, 21-13, in the other singles to help the Tamaraws to a 2-0 lead.

UP responded with Villarin and Marvin Cumbe defeating Jimson Dionisio and Recson Salvacion, 22-24, 21-18, 21-15, in the first doubles. But Natividad teamed up with Jayser Frias to beat Bernadas and Ryamond Padilla in the second doubles to seal the FEU the victory.

Clavecilla's 55 powers Pasga I to Corp Cup lead

BAGUIO CITY—REIGNING NATIONAL SENIORS champion Wigberto "Iggy" Clavecilla shot a one-under-par 68 for 55 points under the Molave scoring system to lift Pasga I into the first-round lead in the 19th Philippine Corporate Cup.

Clavecilla birdied the par-5 first hole before misreading the green in the next two to be at one over on the way to a 25 at the turn.

But the 59-year-old waxed hot in the back nine despite the unusually cold weather, birdieing Nos. 10 and 11 to go even par. Two more birdies nullified a bogey on the 13th for the 30 that completed his 55.

Jun Bellicena backed Clavecilla with 50 points, highlighted by birdies on the fifth and 14th holes, and third man Andy Co turned in a 44 for Pasga's pace-setting 149 points. Pablo Soon's 40 did not count.

Foreign guest team Asaga I from Indonesia, lay second with 146 points on the strength of Agoes Soelewah's 52, Freddy Gondowibowo's 49 and Yudho Mardikusno's 45 at the par-69, Jack Nicklaus-designed course of Camp John Hay here.

Texas I shot 140 to be in third spot, followed by Powerlux II (123), WGTA Semn and ABA Golf Team (120 each), Cebu Infinity and Texas II (116 apiece), Manor (110), Indonesian Asaga II (102) and Barrett Oil (89).

Corinthians 1440 Co. scored 126 on Nemec Lota's 45 points, the 44 of Marilun Ty and Arlette Dizon's 37 to take the early lead in Group III. Group IV had WPGTA III in the lead at 107 on An Se Jin's 41, the 35 of Har Jung Won and Lee Mi Sook's 31.

Pangasinan bags 5 golds in athletics

By June Navarro

VIGAN—PANGASINAN PROVIDED A PREVIEW OF ITS PROWESS IN ATHletics yesterday, hauling five gold medals at the start of the Philippine Olympic Festival at the President Elpidio Quirino Stadium here.

Baguio City earned the distinction of snaring the first gold, but the Pangasinense medal machine hummed smoothly with victories in the girls' 100-meter dash, 3,000m run, long jump, discus throw and 110m hurdles for boys.

Baguio's Cesar Castaneto Jr. survived a ferocious chase in the final straight of the 5,000m run to nose out La Union's Kiven Areglado with a time of 17 minutes and 50.1 seconds for the gold.

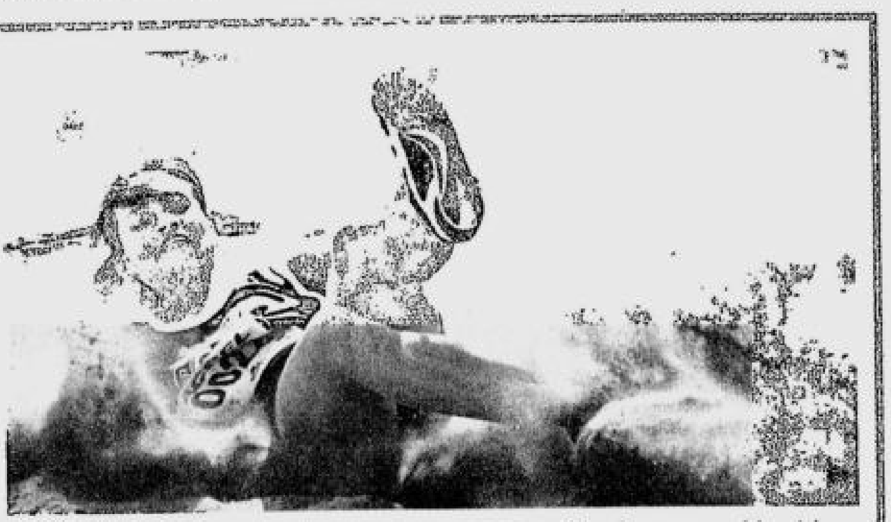
Areglado settled for the silver in 17:50.4 while Jaypee Dayag of Cagayan Valley copped the bronze (17:52.3).

"I gave everything I had and luckily I beat him (Areglado) in the sprint," said Castaneto, a BS Physical Education sophomore at the University of Baguio.

Pangasinan's first gold came from Lany Cardona, who only had to beat teammate Vanessa Membrado in the girls' 3,000m later in the morning to advance to the national championships in Manila.

Running barefoot, the 16-year-old Cardona of Pilar National High School easily defeated Membrado in 12:08.0. Membrado clocked 13:07.01.

Pangasinan plucked four more gold medals in the afternoon through Rochille Corpuz in long jump, Teresa Caaya in discus throw, Rhemilyn Soriano in the 100m and Joebert Maraya in the high hurdles.



ROCHILLE Corpuz helps the Pangasinan medal machine hum smoothly with a victorious performance in the girls' long jump competition. RYAN LIM

Corpuz ruled the girls' long jump with a leap of 5.10 meters, beating teammate Rhemilyn Soriano (5.04) and Ilocos Sur's Rochelle Olegario (4.55).

Soriano later lorded it over in the 100m dash for girls in 13 seconds, besting La Union's Leonilyn Sarmiento (13.6) and Nueva Ecija's Maylin Riopa (13.7).

Caaya heaved the metal plate to a distance of 26.23 meters in the discus, just 20 centimeters farther than Baguio's Stephanie Lictay's throw. Amelene Castro, also of Baguio, was third with 25.58.

Maraya seized the gold by a nose with a time of 16.1 secs over Baguio's Rico Pingol (16.2). Nueva Ecija's Billy Joe Binas (17.2) took the bronze.

Baguio picked up its second gold through Ronalyn Santiago who topped the girls' 100m hurdles in 16.2 seconds. Ilocos Sur's Katherine Pascual (20.4) clinched the silver and Pangasinan's Maricris Carolina (21.0) the bronze.

The Baguio City government is dangling a P1,000 cash incentive for each gold medal won by its athletes here.

In boys' football, Nueva Ecija trounced Benguet, 5-1, in under-15 play, while Laoag City edged Ilocos Sur, 3-2, in the opener of the under-17 division.

Baguio scored two wins in sepak takraw's Group A by beating Cagayan, 17-21, 21-14, 16-14, and Vigan, 21-19 and 21-13. Vigan also dropped a match to Angeles City, 14-21, 21-15, 10-15.

In Group B, Baguio downed Cagayan, 16-21, 21-19, 10-15, while Vigan posted a 21-14, 21-15 victory over Angeles City.

Angeles City beat host Ilocos Sur in baseball, 10-1.

No stopping enforcement of new handicap rules for 2YOs

By Musong R. Castillo

THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW HANDICAPPING system for all incoming two-year-old (2YO) horses will be enforced starting April 3, the Philippine Racing Commission has reiterated.

All incoming juveniles will be governed by the new rules which will, in essence, prevent any horse from getting a group demotion once it starts competing in the races.

Philracom chair Florencio Fianza declared this yesterday at the PSA Forum at Pantalan restaurant in Manila, a few days after a small group of horseowners boycotted the races.

"Nothing will prevent the commission from doing its mandate, and that is to impose reforms in the racing industry," Fianza, a retired police general, said.

The 24 races scheduled last Saturday and Sunday each had reduced fields of entries as "eight to nine (horse) owners" refused to enter their chargers in protest against the new system.

A group which includes former commissioners Marlon Cunanan and Ramon Balatbat accused the Philracom of abusing its authority for planning the implementation of the new rule which they said would favor a prominent horseowner.

The group, which did not identify the horse owner in its statement sent to media offices on Monday, also threatened to boycott future races.

The new system prohibits all juveniles who start their career on April 3 and beyond from going down to lower classification groups.

"We are the only country in the world with this kind of system," Fianza said during the public sports program sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Manila Sports Council chief Arnold "Ali" Atienza.

"We need to internationalize our standards, and reforms like this one is a standard (that is) accepted abroad. "This will mean better chances for all the horses to win, while safeguarding the interest of the betting public."

What's the news behind the news?
- Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer
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It's all over; Marcos flees!
What nonsense is this?
- Eugenia Duran-Apostol
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Inflation hit 4-yr low in Feb

2.6% rate below BSP forecast range

By Doris C. Dumlao

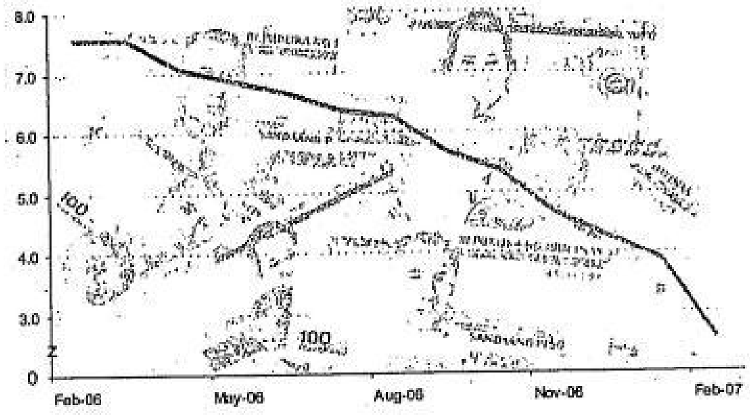
THE COUNTRY'S INFLATION rate slid to a four-year low of 2.6 percent in February from 3.9 percent in January due to softer oil prices and a stronger peso.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that last month's inflation rate, the lowest since the 2.5 percent rate posted in December 2002, had also fallen sharply from the 7.6 percent rate posted in February last year, when the government first raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent and scrapped certain tax exemptions.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Aman-

INFLATION/ B7

INFLATION RATES
February 2006 to February 2007



IN THIS ISSUE

Mergers, acquisitions seen among 'junior' mining firms /B2

PLDT '06 income reached P31.5B /B4

Creditors OK C&P debt swap scheme

By Daxim L. Lucas

PROPERTY DEVELOPER C&P HOMES INC. has secured the approval of a significant number of its creditors for a proposed refinancing of the bonds it issued in the 1990s.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange, C&P Homes said it was expecting to receive "duly completed and executed" letters of acceptance from "more than 90 percent" of the holders of its floating rate notes.

Under the scheme, the company will refinance or acquire the floating rate bonds in exchange for a combination of new debt and equity securities.

The move will allow the listed firm to benefit from the prevailing low interest rate regime and the ongoing boom in the real estate industry.

C&P Homes said its exchange agent, Deutsche Bank AG, had submitted to it the letter of acceptance from various bond holders and would have executed the swap yesterday.

"As indicated in our previous letters, the completion of the exchange of the floating rate notes with new shares and long-term notes will take place on Friday, March 9, 2007," the company said.

Earlier, the company said its board had approved a plan to reacquire $133.47 million in floating rate notes issued by its subsidiary, C&P Homes International Ltd., in 1997 in exchange for new US dollar-denominated notes with a 15-year maturity and new shares of stock in the company.

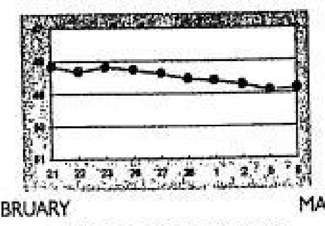
These notes are fully guaranteed by the parent firm, which fell on hard times in the wake of the Asian financial crisis and is now undergoing an SEC-supervised restructuring plan.

"Holders of [floating rate notes] who will

CREDITORS/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



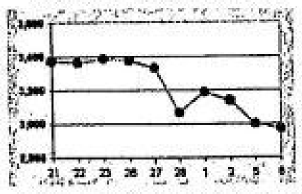
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 48.835 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 6, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 0.82% lower

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.82 percent lower on follow-through selling, but bargaing-hunting emerged to limit the losses, dealers said.

Investors have yet to regain their confidence after the heavy global sell-off that began last week and mostly firmer regional markets failed to inspire confidence, they said.

The composite index fell 24.61 points at 2,973.27 after trading between 2,965.80 and 2,997.88.

The broader all-share index lost 19.29 points to 1,906.03.

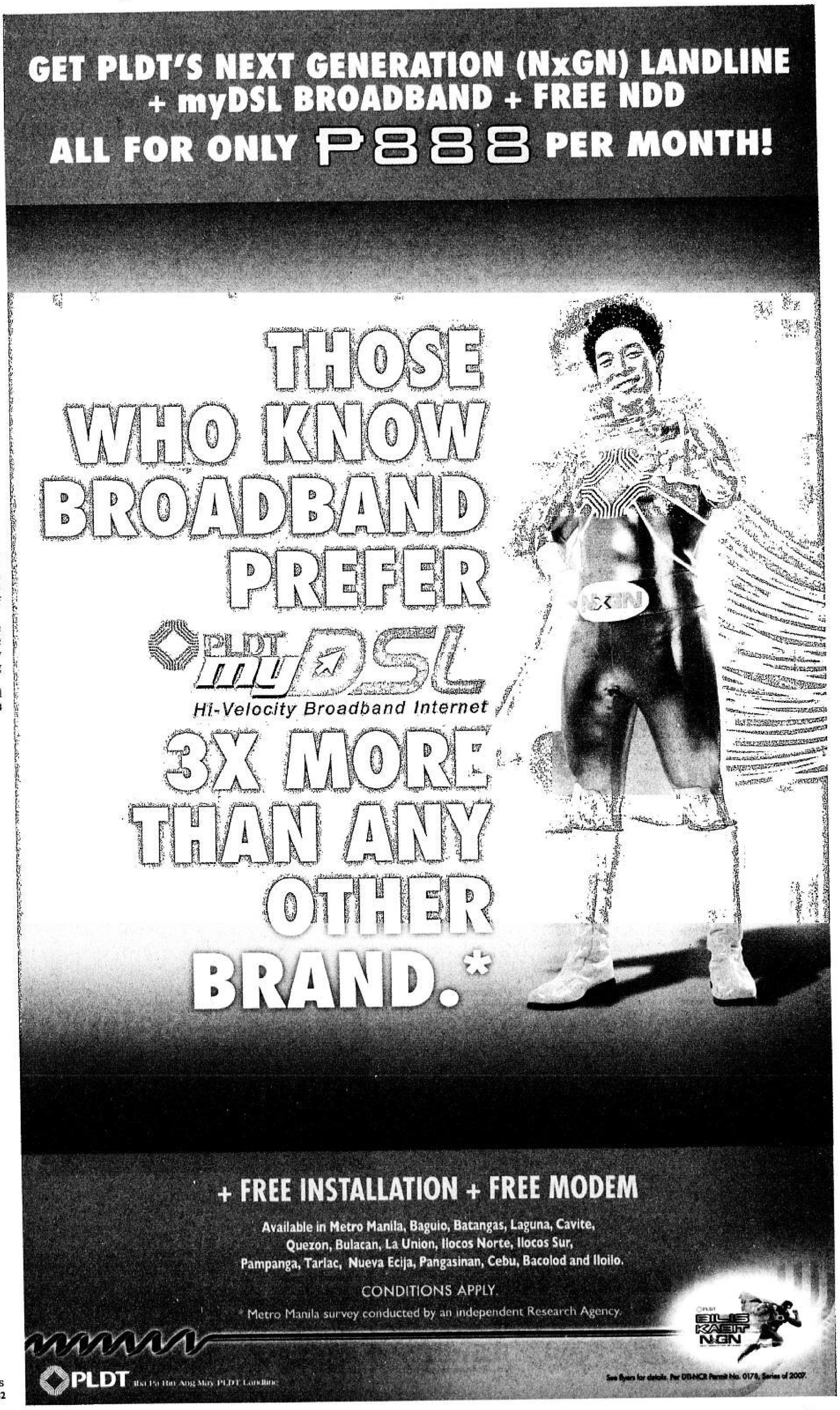
Losers led gainers 62 to 49, with 37 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 7.7 billion shares worth P5 billion ($103.4 million).

Dealers said the market failed to keep pace with other regional bourses that have bounced back since last week's global equities selloff.

"The Philippines is more sensitive to what's

SHARES/ B2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Mergers, acquisitions seen among 'junior' mining firms

Analysts say time is right because of high metal prices

TORONTO, CANADA—IN A MINING MARket awash with cash and parched for discoveries, there are rock-solid reasons why the junior mining sector should consolidate, but ego and economics could get in the way of such deals.

Still playing catch-up from years of skimpy exploration spending when commodity prices were low, senior and mid-tier miners are under increasing pressure to replace their reserves.

The question many of the 15,000 analysts and executives are asking at this year's Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto is where those resources will come from.

The logical answer appears to be the junior sector.

The timing is right because commodity prices are at 25-year highs and expected to stay buoyant for the next few years.

Add to that the huge appetite among senior miners, which have bulked up through acquisitions, to replace reserves.

"The need is really accelerating at the same time as the opportunity has dwindled," said CIBC World Markets analyst Barry Cooper. "I point to the lack of discoveries in the last five years as one of the biggest disappointments in the current bull market."

There is also an increasing gap between the senior and mid-tier producers and juniors, with a high number of junior miners holding just one asset.

There are more than 35 Canadian-listed gold companies with a market capitalization between C$3 million and C$1 billion and more then 50 such base metal companies that are "within the snack bracket of any of the mid-cap companies looking for acquisitions," Bogden said.

But there are barriers in the way of such deals.

"Why hasn't this happened? The biggest reason in my mind is often ego gets in the way—who's going to run it," he told Reuters on the sidelines of the conference. "M&A comes down to people."

Money is another hurdle. Buyers need to unearth the junior jewels, where they can earn attractive margins from project development.

But those are hard to come by, Bogden said.

There is also the matter of owners who don't want to sell—like Mindoro Resources Ltd. Chief Executive Tony Climie.

His company is exploring in the Philippines, where he hopes to get a nickel laterite deposit into production in 2008 and then focus on exploring gold-copper properties. He's not looking for buyers.

"It's just not on our radar screen right now. I think the right time is when you're struggling, when you can't raise capital. The only time we would have considered it in our 10-year history is four or five years ago," he said from the conference trade show floor.

Climie said he has no worries that his company will miss out on the current commodity boom cycle.

"I've been working in Asia for 10-11 years now and I've been seeing what's happening there in terms of the growth in China," he said.

"I think you're going to see little fluctuations as they fine tune their economy and their growth, but are metal prices, resources prices going to come down significantly? No. I don't think so." *Reuters*

More incentives urged to spur investments

By Rizalene Acac
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE INCENTIVES THAT THE government gives investors should be expanded if the Philippines hopes to compete with neighboring countries that offer better packages, said a ranking official of the Board of Investments.

Efren Leaño, executive director of the BOI's technical services, said that the government, for instance, offers an income tax holiday of just four years compared to 10 years in Indonesia and Thailand.

Leaño said other incentives include rebates.

When necessary, the governments of these countries also enter into partnerships with the investors, he said.

Leaño warned that unless the government expanded the package offered to investors, the country would lose out in the race for more investments.

He also said the BOI was not getting the support it needed from other government agencies.

He cited the questions raised by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) over the granting of incentives to investors.

The DFA had said the government was on the losing end because of the millions of pesos in taxes left unpaid by start-up businesses.

Leaño said, however, that incentives were among the most effective means of attracting investors.

He said these investments were needed to generate jobs.

Last year, the BOI recorded P680 billion in new investments.

Most of these investments went to Region 4, the National Capital Region (NCR) and the cities of Cebu, Davao and Manila.

Shares close 0.82% lower

From page B1

happening in the overseas markets, particularly in the US, which is our biggest trading partner," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc.

Investor confidence is still visibly shaken, with the market largely ignoring data showing that consumer prices in February inched up just 2.6 percent from a year earlier, the slowest inflation rate on record in the last four years, remarked Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

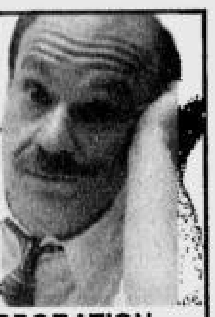
"Today's selloff was not quite as traumatic as the 263.84-point decline last week," said Vistan. "The market is starting to stabilize, but it will take more time to restore investor confidence and they have yet to digest the data on inflation."

"Right now, the market is looking at the behavior of overseas markets for direction."

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone fell P5 to P2,345.

Its rival Globe Telecom Inc. slipped P25 to P1,320.

Food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp.'s A shares lost 50 centavos to P62.50, while its B shares were steady at P72. *AFP*



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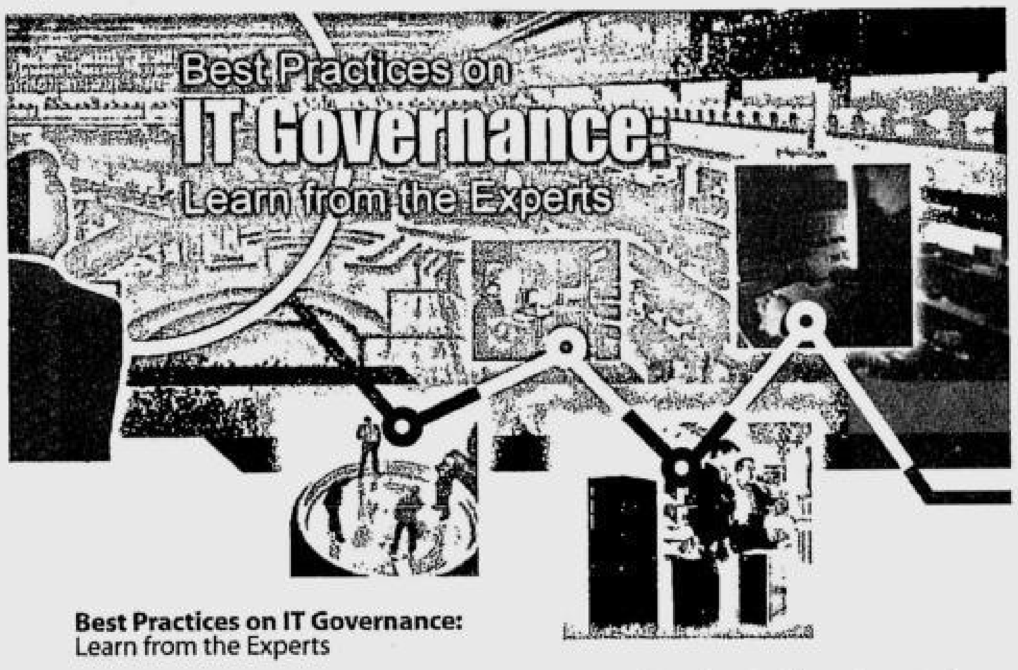

Best Practices on IT Governance:
Learn from the Experts

Over the years, more and more organizations are realizing the significant impact of information technology on its survival and success. In particular, successful enterprises should understand the risk and exploit the benefits of IT and undermine ways to ensure that its IT strategy is aligned with its business strategy. Imperatively, these strategies and goals should be cascaded to the entire organization with determined organizational structures that facilitate the implementation of the identified strategies. Also, organizations should insist that an IT control framework be adopted and implemented to efficiently and effectively measure IT performance vis-à-vis its business goals.

Understand the issues and the strategic importance of IT in ensuring business growth and success.

Listen to experts as they share proven technologies and best practices in data and information management, business continuity, power management techniques, and business security issues in sustaining operations and ensuring that IT expectations are met.

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1:30 - 2:15 pm	Best Practices on IT Governance - Lessons & Experiences Learned: (IBM Rational Portfolio Manager Customer Success) Randel Dean Powell, PMP WWW ISV and Developer Skills Team Manager IBM
	Enterprise Content Management JP Vicente IBM
2:15 - 3:00 pm	Diffusing "Best of Breed": Multi-Layered Security Speaker Benjamin Teh, Sales Director - South Asia Fortinet
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Coffee Break
3:15 - 4:00 pm	High Availability Solution Ian de la Rosa, Enterprise Business Development Manager APC
4:00 - 4:45 pm	IT Governance is All About Compliance Sal Fernando, EMC Program Manager - Asia Pacific EMC

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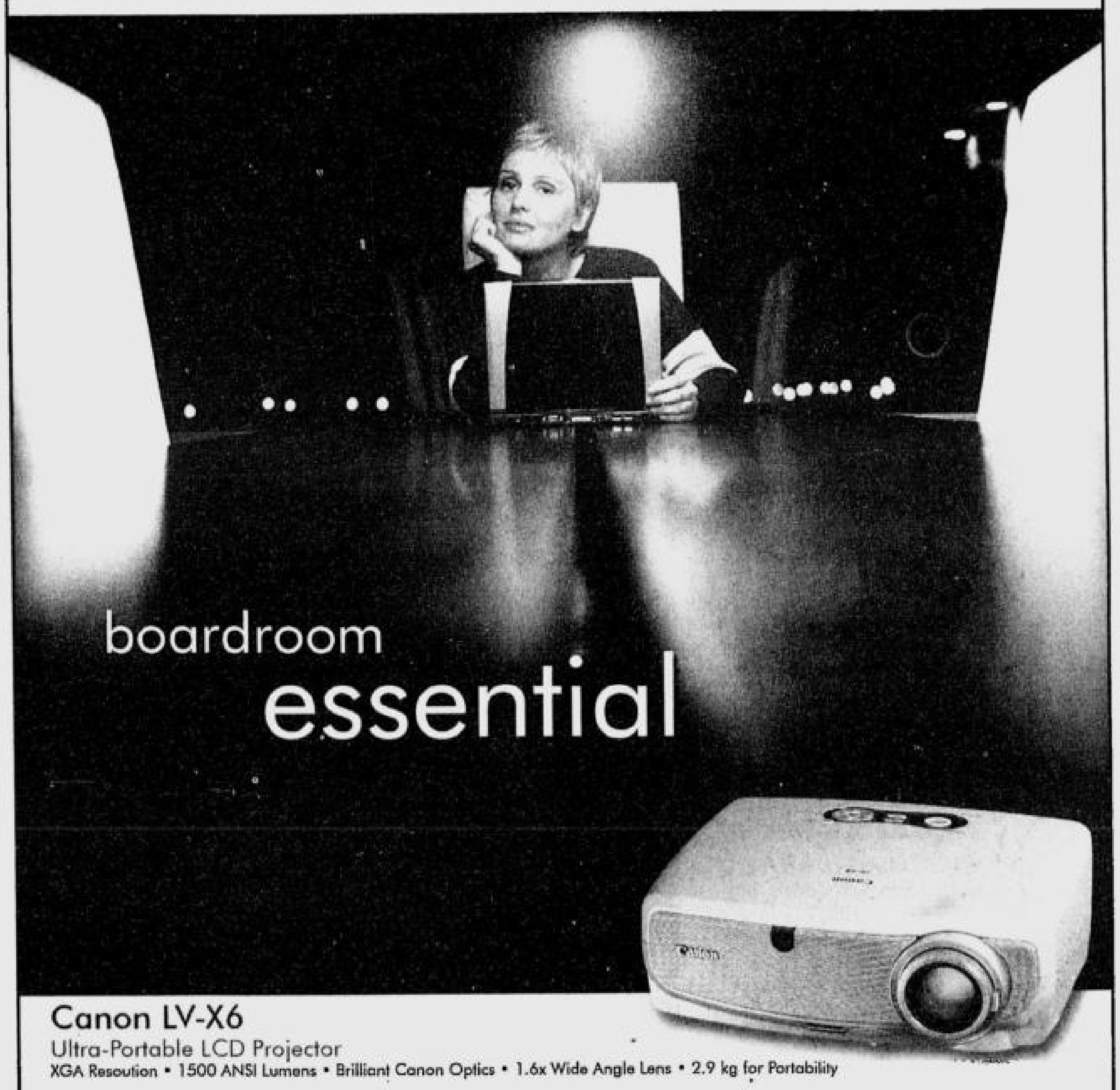

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Cebu Pacific, SeAir fighting over routes

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—An official of Clark-based Southeast Asian Airlines (SeAir) denied that his company was acting as a front for Singapore's Tiger Airways when it applied for permits to new local and international routes that Cebu Pacific had blocked before the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB).

"That's not true," Avelino Zapanta, SeAir president, said of Cebu Pacific's claim that SeAir had struck a tie-up with Tiger Airways.

SeAir is applying for authority to service the following routes: Clark-Davao-Clark; Clark-Cebu-Clark; Clark-Macau-Clark and Clark-Singapore-Clark.

Zapanta also said SeAir's lease of two, 180-seat Airbus 320 from Tiger Airways and its use of the latter's global reservation system were all being paid for by his company.

SeAir pioneered airline operations in Clark in 1994, with a fleet of seven LET 410-UPV-E and four Dornier 328 planes.

Zapanta said he was expecting to

CEBU/ B6

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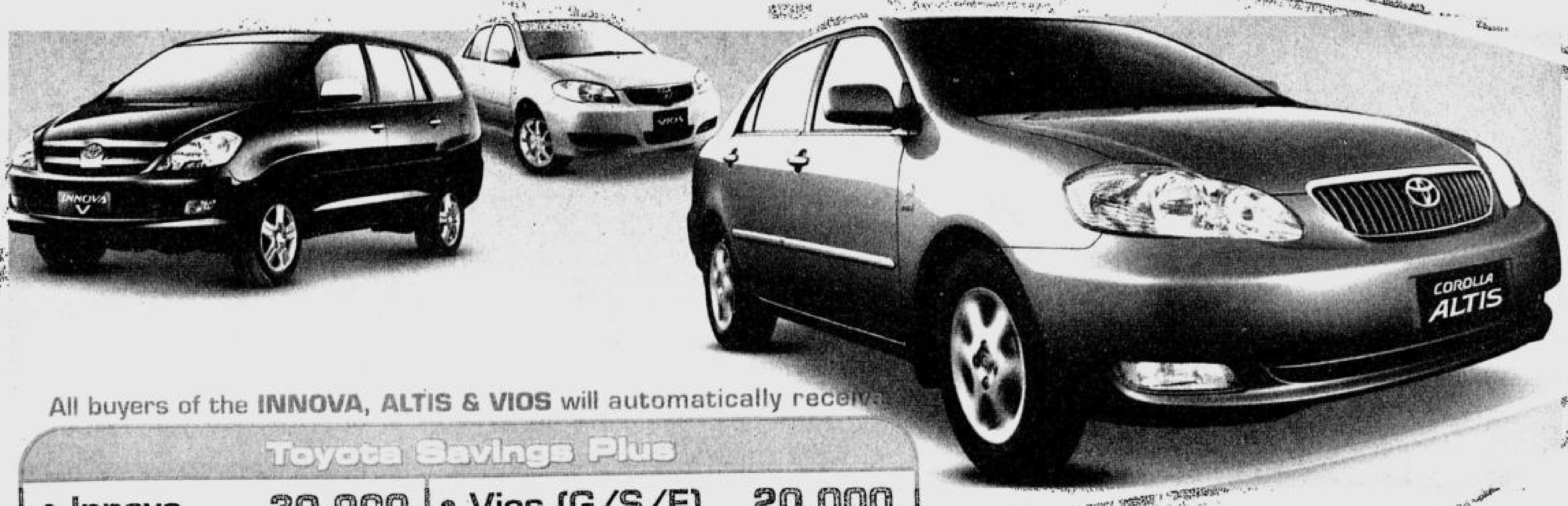

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TOYOTA moving forward

PLDT '06 income reached P31.5B

But telco's Q4 net profit fell due to peso's strength

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE Telephone Co. (PLDT) yesterday said that its 2006 net income grew three percent to P35.1 billion, beating market estimates for a 3-percent drop.

According to PLDT, market analysts may have used foreign exchange assumptions that were different than those used by the company.

However, the country's largest listed group said that its fourth quarter net income fell nearly 8 percent as a rising peso ate into dollar-linked revenues.

PLDT said it had a net income of P8.95 billion in the fourth quarter against P9.7 billion in the same period the previous year.

Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd. holds a 30-percent stake in PLDT, while Japan's NTT group accounts for 14 percent.

PLDT's core net income rose to P31.5 billion in 2006. The figure was nine percent higher than the P29 billion in 2005, as predicted by analysts.

The impact of currency fluctuations, deferred taxes and other nonrecurring charges are excluded in computing the core net income.

Consolidated service revenues went up 3 percent to P125.1 billion.

Also, consolidated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) improved by 3 percent to P79.6 billion.

Citing its robust performance, PLDT declared a final dividend of P50 a share, to be added to previously paid interim dividends of P50 a share. This means total dividends for the year will amount to P100 a share, representing a payout of 60 percent of 2006 core earnings.

PLDT said the total dividend payments for 2006 would amount to P18.8 billion, 53-percent higher than the P12.3 billion paid out in 2005.

For 2007, PLDT expects its core net income to rise to as much as P33 billion, as the company works on maximizing its broadband business.

PLDT said it will work on the integration of its information technology and other convergent platforms in 2007.

"We will maximize the opportunities provided by our large subscriber base and our extensive infrastructure, especially in the rapidly expanding broadband space where we can harness our fixed and wireless capabilities to capitalize on its huge potential," said PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said PLDT's performance in 2007 would be affected by a number of factors, including currency fluctuations, which directly affect dollar-linked revenues, and an increase in depreciation and income tax provisions.

"Our dollar-linked revenues arising from the local exchange and international long distance businesses were adversely impacted by the appreciation of the average US dollar/peso exchange rate in 2006," PLDT said.

PANGILINAN

About 40 percent of PLDT's revenues are dollar-linked, and the peso's 8.4 percent gain against the US dollar last year hit the company's bottomline.

"Fixed line revenues would have improved 2 percent year-on-year if foreign exchange rates had remained stable," the company said.

Meanwhile, senior vice president Annabelle Rausa-Chan said the PLDT group is more likely to refinance dollar-denominated debts with peso-denominated ones.

"The strategy is replacement, not prepayment," she said. "There is potential for replacing $250 million to $300 million in debts."

With a report from Reuters

Creditors OK C&P debt swap scheme

From page B1

not accept the said offer will be repaid in cash on a discounted basis," the company said.

"The transaction will drastically reduce our debt and significantly strengthen our balance sheet," C&P Homes chief financial officer Estrellita Tan said. "This, in turn, will give C&P the flexibility to aggressively pursue various strategic options in the near- to medium-term."

As of its 2005 financial statements, the firm was struggling under P13.2 billion worth of assorted debt and liabilities, although this represented an improvement over the P16.3 billion it reported in the previous year.

C&P Homes president and CEO Maribeth Tolentino said the finalization of the debt rationalization plan "is a significant milestone in the history of [the] company."

"With our debt problems completely addressed, we are now poised to undertake strategic options that will benefit our various stakeholders, including the general public," she added.

Alliance Global to issue preferred shares

By Daxim L. Lucas

ALLIANCE GLOBAL Group Inc., the holding firm that controls 49 percent of the local McDonald's franchise, will issue P30 million worth of preferred shares as part of its capital restructuring scheme.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Alliance Global said it had received approval from its board of directors to reclassify a total of 30 million unissued common shares, with a par value of P1 apiece, into three billion preferred shares with a par value of P0.01 per share.

"The preferred shares shall be voting, cumulative, nonparticipating, nonconvertible and nonredeemable, and shall have preference over common shares in case of liquidation or dissolution of the company," the firm said in a statement.

Alliance Global did not reveal where the proceeds would go, although the firm had earlier outlined a plan to issue common shares as part of its capital raising exercise for this year's expansion plans.

The firm's board also authorized the hiring of BDO Capital & Investment Corp. as financial advisor to the company on the final structure of the preferred shares to be eventually issued.

The company told the exchange that its preferred shares "may be issued from time to time in one or more series as may be determined by the board of directors, which shall likewise be authorized to establish and designate each particular series of preferred shares, to fix the number of shares to be included in each of such series, and to determine the dividend rate, issue price and other terms and conditions for such shares."

Recently, Alliance Global bought additional shares in Megaworld Corp. to raise its stake in the property developer to 46 percent from 21 percent. It has also agreed to acquire brandy maker Emperador Distillers Inc.

For this year, the firm plans to spend up to P5 billion to expand its business and put up an additional 25 branches of the US burger chain.

The company will raise P3.3 billion in fresh capital through a preemptive rights offer.

"Expanded business activity would increase property and equipment costs, inventories, current receivables and trade payables by P3 billion, P500 million, P600 million and P500 million, respectively," the firm said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 6, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	9.4	9.6	9.4	9.5	265,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	51.5	53	51	52.5	2,146,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63	63	62.5	63	1,640,000
China Banking Corp.	840	840	825	825	810
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.48	6,120,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	94	95.5	94	94.5	93,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	55	56.5	55	56	4,189,000
Philippine National Bank	45	45	43.5	44.5	64,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	38.5	38.5	37.5	38	314,300
Security Bank Corp.	73	73	72	73	34,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	57.5	58.5	57.5	58.5	38,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	20,000
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	5.7	5.9	5.6	5.8	465,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1580	1580	1580	1580	760
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.82	455,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	660	660	640	650	6,780
Ivantage Corp.	1.46	1.5	1.46	1.48	1,315,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.4	31,542,000
First Gen Corp.	51.5	51.5	49	49	801,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	69	69	66	66.5	1,842,300
Manila Electric Co. A	65	66	63	64	165,600
Manila Electric Co. B	65	66	63.5	64	2,312,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	9.1	8.9	9	4,278,000
Petron Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.15	4.25	6,595,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.36	1.36	1.26	1.26	484,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.45	235,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	24	23	23.5	29,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	46.5	47	46	46.5	697,400
RFM Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	486,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	20,900
San Miguel Corp. B	72.5	72.5	71.5	72	426,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	1.9	2	1.88	1.92	1,616,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	18	17.25	17.75	2,451,100
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.42	1.46	1.42	1.46	44,802,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.2	4.45	4.2	4.45	2,479,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.2	8	8.1	3,010,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	149,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.6	2,570,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	3	3	3	3	20,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.29	0.33	0.29	0.33	22,840,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	91,500,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	19,500,000
Ayala Corp.	535	550	520	520	404,320
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.69	0.69	600,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.9	8	7.8	7.9	2,594,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	26,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.95	3	1,947,000
APC Group Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	4,370,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	186,700,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.36	1.42	1.32	1.42	9,479,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.5	3.35	3.4	110,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	5.1	5.2	4.6	4.9	617,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.2	2.9	3.1	64,896,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	754,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.8	1,898,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	301,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	1,978,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	7.8	8.1	7.7	8.1	725,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.54	1.6	1,590,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	14,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.26	2,430,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1,295,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	150,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	9,910,000
SM Investments Corp.	337.5	342.5	322.5	322.5	176,510
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	5,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	590,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15	15.25	15	15.25	21,961,700
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.28	1.22	1.26	13,361,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.16	1.22	1.14	1.22	1,036,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	610,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.8	395,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.16	2.4	2.16	2.24	1,477,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.74	0.75	0.73	0.74	24,940,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.46	1.56	1.46	1.5	163,512,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.42	0.47	0.42	0.47	2,330,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.81	0.86	0.81	0.85	9,250,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.55	2.65	155,684,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.2	4.2	18,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.75	0.78	10,310,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19	19	17.75	18.25	4,580,700
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.62	9,640,000
Sm Development Corp.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.7	2,223,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.65	0.69	0.64	0.68	1,060,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22	22	22	22	70,600
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.58	1.66	1.58	1.66	13,861,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1340	1340	1320	1320	56,030
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.5	4,884,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2350	2355	2330	2345	500,520
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.27	16,630,000
Diversified Fin. Network	5.2	5.2	4.2	4.5	103,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	70,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	367,000
IPVG Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.4	785,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.0625	0.065	58,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.66	1.78	1.66	1.74	1,826,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.1	2.1	2.06	2.06	168,000
Philweb Corp.	0.043	0.043	0.041	0.042	144,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	326,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	26.5	27	26.5	27	2,140,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	1,568,000
Hotel & Leisure					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.65	3,623,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.87	0.88	0.86	0.86	1,050,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8	8.2	8	8.2	20,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	205,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.46	2.5	2,295,000
Paxys Inc.	25	25	22.5	24.25	2,914,300
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.9	1,234,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.85	329,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	251,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	8.6	8.2	8.5	959,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11	11	11	6,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.44	1.54	129,176,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	20,270,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.31	20,790,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.028	0.025	0.028	796,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.032	0.03	0.032	399,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.017	0.018	0.016	0.018	4,147,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.75	3.9	3.75	3.85	8,973,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	118,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.69	0.7	0.66	0.7	980,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.04	1.1	0.99	1.1	7,280,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	6,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	342,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	90,200,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	127,200,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.2	9.3	9.2	9.2	305,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	117	117	117	117	6,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	11	11	11	11	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	11	11	11	11	300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	11	11	11	11	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	11	11	11	11	3,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	11	11	11	11	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	11	11	11	11	1,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	11	11	11	11	2,100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	22	22.25	22	22.25	123,500
Metro Pac. Inv.- Warrants	3	3	3	3	11,000
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES					
Information Capital Tech.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	3,000

CURRENCIES

March 6, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.763767	1.000000	48.8640
Japan	Yen	0.006608	0.008652	0.4228
United Kingdom	Pound	1.467502	1.921400	93.8873
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097731	0.127959	6.2526
Switzerland	Franc	0.625577	0.819068	40.0229
Canada	Dollar	0.646931	0.847027	41.3891
Singapore	Dollar	0.499488	0.653979	31.9560
Australia	Dollar	0.591059	0.773874	37.8146
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.026068	2.652731	129.6230
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.203769	0.266795	13.0367
Brunei	Dollar	0.497860	0.651848	31.8519
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023109	0.030257	1.4785
UAE	Dirham	0.208009	0.272346	13.3079
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.309300	63.9776
Korea	Won	0.000803	0.001052	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.098550	0.129032	6.3050
Argentina	Peso	0.246377	0.322581	15.7626
Brazil	Real	0.357569	0.468165	22.8764
Denmark	Kroner	0.134267	0.175796	8.5901
India	Rupee	0.017190	0.022507	1.0998
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217226	0.284414	13.8976
Mexico	New Peso	0.068269	0.089385	4.3677
New Zealand	Dollar	0.517142	0.677094	33.0855
Norway	Kroner	0.122175	0.159964	7.8165
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012582	0.016473	0.8049
South Africa	Rand	0.102519	0.134228	6.5589
Sweden	Kroner	0.107378	0.140590	6.8698
Syria	Pound	0.014713	0.019264	0.9413
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023236	0.030423	1.4866
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000356	0.000466	0.0228

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 5, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of March 5, 2007

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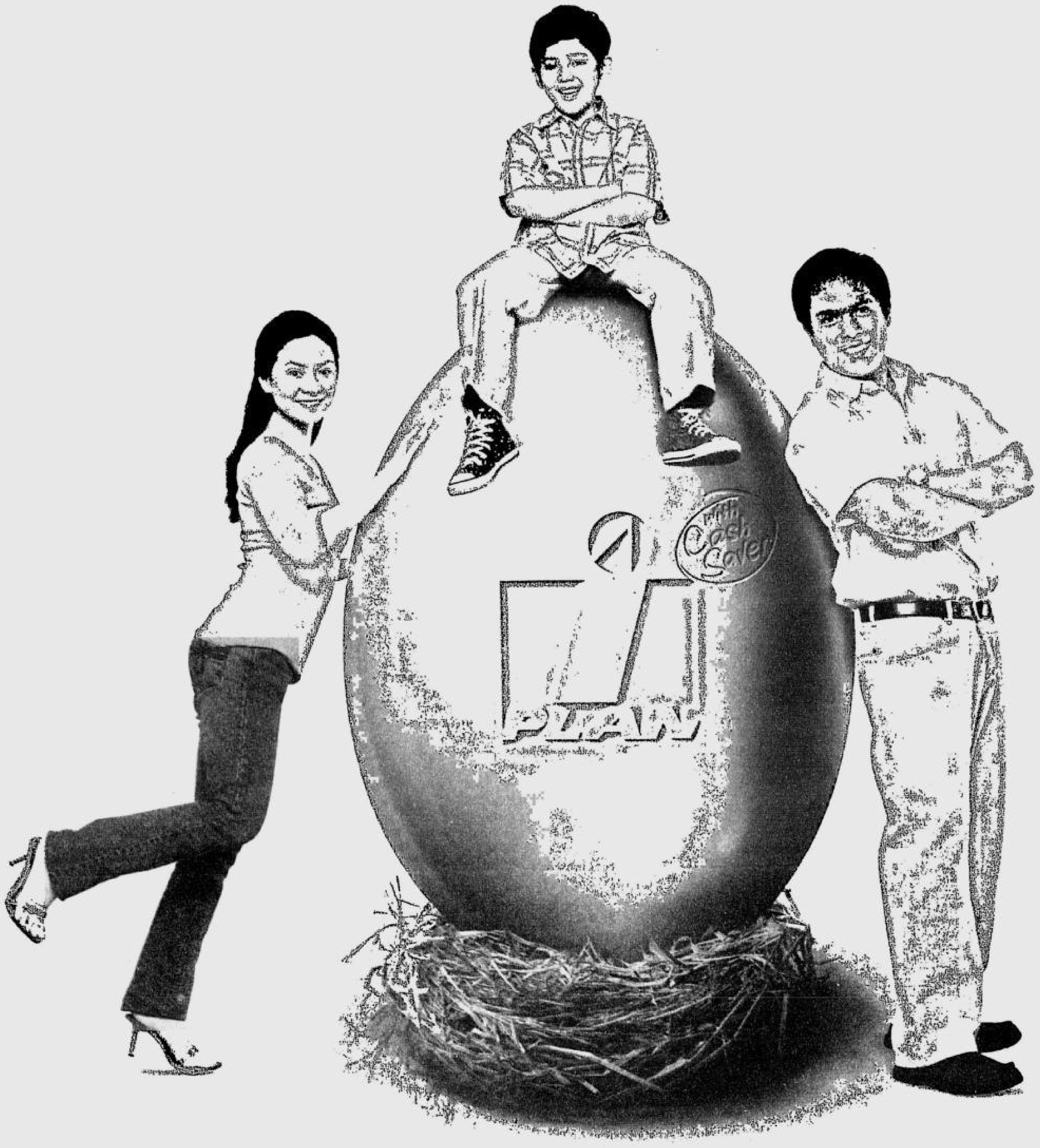

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Gov't vows to work harder after Fitch disappointment

Ratings firm maintains stable credit outlook on RP

TEVES

THE PHILIPPINES PUT A BRAVE face on Fitch Ratings' decision not to upgrade the country's credit rating or outlook, promising to work doubly hard to sustain improvements in its public finances.

The government had been hoping that Fitch would raise its rating, currently pegged at two notches below investment grade, after the government slashed its budget deficit last year and subsequently cut its borrowing plan for 2007.

A lower rating would reduce the country's borrowing costs.

"We have to work harder and we will have to monitor what needs to be done in revenue enhancement and tax administration," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said on Tuesday.

"We will work hard and try to increase our tax and non-tax revenues," he added.

Fitch on Monday affirmed its stable credit outlook on the Philippines but warned that the country's fiscal gains might be at risk if revenue growth fails to keep pace with a government plan to raise capital spending this year.

Rival agencies Moody's and Standard & Poor's are also reviewing their ratings on the Philippines, but neither appears to have immediate plans for an upgrade as they wait to see evidence of a permanent improvement in fiscal fortunes.

All three agencies raised their outlook on the Philippines to stable from negative last year. Moody's rates Philippine sovereign debt at four notches below investment grade and Standard & Poor's at three notches below.

Indonesia has overtaken the Philippines as the biggest issuer of sovereign offshore bonds in Asia, excluding Japan, after Manila cut its overseas borrowing requirement to $1 billion this year from $2.85 billion in 2006.

The Philippines ended 2006 with a budget shortfall of P62.2 billion, the lowest in eight years and the third year in a row that the deficit was below target but the improvement had more to do with lower-than-expected expenditure than higher tax revenues.

The government said it will spend more on its creaking infrastructure in 2007 after years of restraint. *Reports from Reuters, AFP*

Soured NHMFC housing loans declining

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STRONG INFLOW OF REMITTANCES from overseas Filipino workers, rising property values and the low interest rate environment have helped ensure a faster turnaround in delinquent housing loans serviced by distressed asset manager Bahay Financial Services Inc.

In a press briefing yesterday, BFS president Federico Cadiz said less than a year after its establishment, the asset manager had penetrated 24 percent of the P13-billion soured portfolio acquired by Balikatan Housing Finance Inc. in November 2005.

Balikatan is a joint venture between Deutsche Bank and state-controlled National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. It took over the bad residential mortgage loans unloaded by NHMFC.

Through its various loan resolution programs, BFS provides delinquent borrowers with the opportunity to address outstanding obligations. Clients are given the following options: outright payment of outstanding loans, refinancing, and *dacion en pago* or payment in kind.

Of the 52,000 accounts serviced by BFS, Cadiz estimated that 5,000 had been resolved, half of which had opted to pay their obligations in order to gain full ownership of the property while the half had signed loan refinancing deals.

As many borrowers' incomes have risen, especially with the remittances of family members working abroad, Cadiz said outright payments were common. The costs of these housing units range from P200,000 to P2 million.

"As we go down the income brackets, refinancing will likely be the preferred option," he said.

Based on BFS statistics, 21 percent of the account holders who had availed themselves of BFS programs, including those already negotiating for loan resolution, depend on OFW remittances to support their loan payments.

He said BFS, having built the infrastructure to unlock values from bad loans, was targeting to resolve the entire portfolio—80 percent of which was located in Luzon—within three years. In the future, he said the company could expand its portfolio by buying more assets or offer its services to banks in need of assistance in addressing bad assets.

"Right now, mortgage servicing expertise is confined to the developers and the banks but remedial or default management is not their core business," he said.

He said BFS, in the future, could be "one big BPO (business process outsourcing) provider for mortgage."

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

MANAGEMENT, OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND PROMOTION OF PHASE II (CONTAINER TERMINAL A-1) AT THE PORT OF BATANGAS.

1. The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) has constructed a container berth and terminal (Container Terminal "A-1") in the Port of Batangas under the Batangas Port Development Project Phase II through the financial assistance of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).
2. The PPA thru the Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and shortlisting for the management, operation, maintenance, development, and promotion of Phase II (Container Terminal A-1) at the Port of Batangas.
3. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs not later than **March 14, 2007, 4:00 p.m.**, delivered by hand, through mail, or by facsimile, at Room 201, Office of the AGM for Operations, 2nd Floor Marsman Building, 22 Muelle de San Francisco, Gate 1, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila, Philippines, and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P10,000.00 (VAT exclusive).
4. The last day of submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents, scheduled on **March 15, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the Board Room, 5th Floor Marsman Building, 22 Muelle de San Francisco, Gate 1, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila, Philippines. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on non-discretionary "Pass/Fail" criteria. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents.
5. The SBAC shall draw up the short list of bidders from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible in accordance with the provisions of PPA Administrative Order No. 01-2006. The short list shall consist of seven (7) prospective bidders. The criteria and rating system for short listing shall be as follows:

a.	Track record of the cargo handler and associates, in case of joint ventures, considering both the overall experience of the bidder	15%
b.	Qualification of key officers	50%
c.	Capitalization	35%

6. Only those who are short listed will be entitled to submit bids. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive procedures as specified in PPA Administrative Order No. 01-2006.
7. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification.
8. The cost of bidding documents shall be a non-refundable amount of P50,000.00 (VAT exclusive).
9. The cargo handling contract shall be for a period of twenty five (25) years.
10. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PPA at the address given below from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
11. A Pre-Eligibility Conference is set on Monday, **March 12, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the Board Room, 5th Floor Marsman Building, 22 Muelle de San Francisco, Gate 1, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila, Philippines, to discuss, among others, matters relative to the eligibility requirements and other relevant eligibility matters.
12. PPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, annul the bidding process, or award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

MR. BENJAMIN B. CECILIO
Chairperson
Special Bids and Awards Committee
Philippine Ports Authority
Room 201, Office of the AGM for Operations
2nd Floor Marsman Building, 22 Muelle de San Francisco
South Harbor, Port Area
Manila, Philippines
Email Address: bbc@ppa.com.ph
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Authorized Representative of the SBAC
Chairperson

(PDI–Feb. 21 & March 7, 2007)

Time romanticizes NPA

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE COVER STORY OF TIME (Issue of last Feb. 5) takes us into "an exclusive look at what drives the NPA—and at why the Philippine government may never defeat it."

The story "The War With No End" is about a jungle platoon operating in Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte. Andrew Marshall wrote it, with reporting by Nelly Sindayen and photographs by Philip Blenkinsop.

Marshall is not taken in by the hospitality of the communist guerrillas. But the story, and particularly the photographs, romanticizes the NPA nonetheless.

In 1970, Jose Maria Sison set up the Communist Party with an armed component, the New People's Army (NPA) under Kumander Dante. Adopting the Maoist line, Sison was sure that when the NPA controls the countryside, the cities would fall like overripe guavas. Sison also nurtured the Maoist myth that the political struggle of the party—now represented by such front organizations as Bayan Muna, Anak Pawis and Gabriela—was not connected at all with the armed struggle of the NPA.

Sison has been in self-exile in Holland for the past 20 years. There has been talk that, if he ever returns to the Philippines, his name will be added forthwith to the list of extra-judicial killings. Dante has long become respectable; he runs a large multi-purpose cooperative somewhere in the lowlands of Central Luzon.

The communists continue to mouth the fallacy that the NPA exists because of legitimate grievances. They say they are fighting poverty and injustice. But there are dozens of countries much poorer than we are, but have no communist insurgencies. If the distant barrios are groveling in abject poverty it is because the NPA bleeds them dry with their so-called revolutionary taxes.

If the NPA is fighting injustice, do they intend to replace our justice system, flawed as it is, with their kangaroo courts? Will the NPA install a secret police?

I am willing to grant that, in the beginning, the NPA was welcomed by the poor folks in the far-flung barrios as liberators and protectors. But today, the very people the NPA was supposed to protect have become hapless victims.

The NPA occasionally attacks an isolated Army outpost just to prove that they are still around. But the NPA's main activity is to raise funds.

The NPA has deteriorated into a savage extortionist gang. In the areas they control, all that grows or moves—coconuts and copra, rattan and lumber, rice and corn, fish and livestock—are slapped with 10 percent revolutionary tax. Public school teachers' salaries, worker's wages are not spared. A village grocery store is charged a fixed monthly excise tax. And, if the priest or pastor allows it, the NPA will take 10 percent of Church collections. In the current run-up to the May elections, the NPA will charge every candidate permit-to-campaign fee.

All transactions are in cold cash. There are no invoices or receipts. This is why the money trail is hard to track down.

Where does the money go? It certainly does not stay in the jungle. There is little there to spend it on. The money ends up in Manila. Some of it is probably shipped to Holland. I will not be surprised if the national treasurer lives in one of the posh villages in Makati. He might even be a neighbor of mine in Bel-Air.

What is ahead of the NPA? The Maoist strategy worked in China in the '30s and '40s. It has failed miserably here. The Armed Forces may never beat the NPA, but as long as guerrilla warfare is its only capability, the NPA cannot win either. In China and Vietnam, the communist guerrillas ultimately had to engage the government in conventional warfare. They finally won when their battle tanks rolled into the Presidential Palace. That will never happen here.

What the government should do is to track down the money trail and finally end the myth that the political struggle is completely independent of the armed struggle. That would be great cover story for Time.

Maynilad, union ink CBA deal

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE NEW MANAGEMENT OF Maynilad Water Services Inc. secured a reprieve from labor troubles through the signing of a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with its employees' union.

In a statement, the firm said that it had sealed a deal with the Maynilad Water and Sewerage Union-Philippine Transport General Workers Organization last week covering the firm's 1,700 rank-and-file employees.

"The new CBA was reached after only a few sessions between Maynilad management and MWSU, reflecting the unstinting support of the MWSU for Maynilad's new owners, the DMCI-MPIC consortium," Metro Pacific Investment Corp. told the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The benefits granted by the new CBA to Maynilad rank-and-file employees include: a pay increase of P1,850 starting Jan. 1, 2007, another pay increase of P1,950 starting Jan. 1, 2008, a P5,000 signing bonus, and additional P100 rice and meal allowance per month for the next two years.

Labor Undersecretary Romeo Lagman, who witnessed the signing, commended the swift negotiation process.

"By my experience, negotiations usually run for up to 10 months," Lagman said in the statement. "So when CBAs are concluded in three or four sessions like in [the case of] Maynilad, I am pleasantly surprised."

Lucia Magno, president of the MWSU, cited the union's full support for the new company owners, DMCI-MPIC, as the reason for the smooth and quick CBA negotiations.

On the part of the new Maynilad owners, Isidro Consunji, a member of the Maynilad board and DMCI Holdings president, assured the union that the new management was committed to uplift the interests of the rank-and-file, as evidenced by the successful CBA process.

Samsung eyes top spot in IT market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES Corp. yesterday said it was hoping to more than double its revenue from information technology products to $50 million in 2007 in line with efforts to take the No. 1 spot in the domestic IT market.

Bongwan Kim, SEPC vice president for IT, said in a briefing that this year's sales target for IT products was about 127 percent more than the $22 million posted in 2006.

Kim said SEPC sales could still grow as there were "lots of opportunities" in the Philippines that started penetrating in 2003.

"Our sales growth target (is not overly ambitious) if you take note that we reached $22 million in just three years," Kim said.

He said Samsung's liquid crystal display monitors would drive growth considering that the devices were its best-selling products, cornering 60 percent of total sales.

Samsung's other IT products include printers and DVD writers.

"Also, we are putting more attention to corporate clients especially since call centers (and other business process outsourcing service providers are booming)," Kim said.

In a prepared statement, SEPC president and chief executive Spencer Shim said: "Samsung is setting its goal in being a major IT player in the Philippines, leveraging on its expertise in digital convergence, innovation and technology."

Cebu Pacific, SeAir fighting over routes

From page B3

make a ruling on the application since Cebu Pacific has been given 15 days to comment.

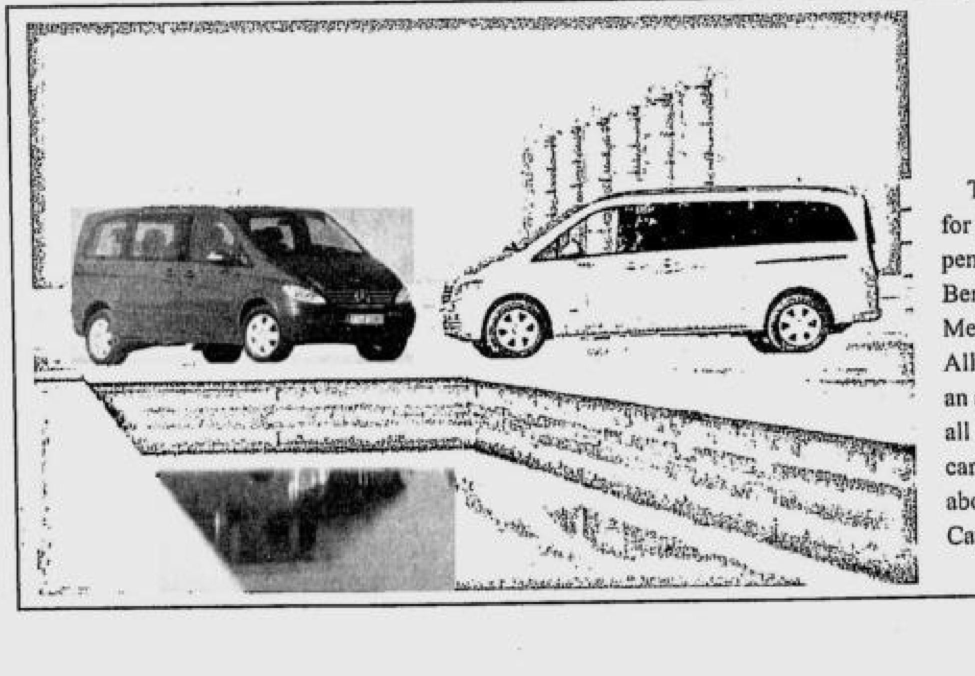
"It's already overdue," he said of the decision.

He said the CAB subjected SeAir's application to a hearing, instead of it being studied only by the board's executive director.

Cebu Pacific officials declined comment pending CAB action on the SeAir application.

Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, chief of the Subic-Clark Alliance Development Council and the Luzon Urban Beltway super region, said he was "deeply concerned" about the issue and said he and officials of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) at Clark were "helping sort out the problem."

Frankie Villanueva, president of the Clark Investors and Locators Association, said the CAB should "promote the true spirit of the open skies policy." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



The Stars shine the brightest in the Mercedes-Benz showrooms on March 9-11

There are so many good predictions for the year and amongst them are happening this weekend at the Mercedes-Benz showrooms. From March 9-11, Mercedes-Benz is celebrating its annual All-Star Weekend now on its 2nd year - - an activity that is set to open the doors to all Filipino families to get closer to the cars they've always loved and dreamed about. This 3-day limited engagement, Cats Motors general distributor of Mercedes-Benz, helps you realize your dreams with flexible financing packages for all the Mercedes-Benz models including the All-New Viano. The All-New Viano recently graced the Philippine market and it surely captured the interests of Filipinos as this Mercedes-Benz luxury MPV boasts of the best combination of Mercedes-Benz advanced safety, comfort, design and elegance.

With all the other activities that awaits you from test-drives to onsite assessments for all vehicle trade-ins to premium Mercedes-Benz raffle items, surely you'll feel that this is your lucky day. Bring your whole family and friends at our Mercedes-Benz Greenhills (723-5808) and Global City (815-7777) showrooms and experience the star that shines your way. For more info, visit www.mercedes-benz.com.ph.

ADVT

Tuna firms back BIMP-EAGA

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—TUNA INDUSTRY players here defended the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), saying they would continue to do trade with their partners in the trade region.

Domingo Teng, immediate past president of the Socsksargen Federation of Fishing Association and Allied Industries, said the "private sector in Mindanao, particularly those in the local fishing industry, have always been confident about doing trade in BIMP-EAGA areas."

Teng gave the statement in response to the view expressed recently by Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri that BIMP-EAGA was a "wrong economic partner" for Mindanao.

"It is not true that nothing has happened in BIMP-EAGA," Teng said.

Through the BIMP-EAGA, Teng said, the fishing industry players in Southern Mindanao were able to build partnerships with their counterparts.

He said that two years ago, two local fishing companies based in Southern Mindanao were able to put up canneries in Bitung, North Sulawesi through a joint venture agreement with Indonesian counterparts.

The Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco) said the cannery investments amounted to as much as $7 million each and were able to generate more than 3,000 jobs.

Medco added that in General Santos City alone, known as the tuna capital of the Philippines, the industry had generated a total of about 100,000 jobs in canneries, fishing vessels, processing plants and other ancillary industries.

Teng said there were about 10 small and big fishing and fish processing companies interested in joint venture agreements in BIMP-EAGA.

He said trading in BIMP-EAGA was "not about competition, but complementation and consolidation of products and services that are enough to seize a sizeable share in the international markets like the US, China and Europe."

Gov't sees T-bill rates at 4-4.5%

DBCC sticks to target range

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS local interest rates based on the 91-day treasury bill rate to range from 4-4.5 percent this year.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran yesterday said the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee was sticking to its projected range for now, which was slightly higher than the latest inflation forecast of 3.3-3.8 percent.

As of last Monday's auction by the Bureau of Treasury, the 91-day T-bill rate—which is used by banks in pricing loans—had inched up to an average of 2.935 percent after earlier hitting a record low of 2.885 percent.

The 91-day T-bill rate is now slightly higher than the annual inflation rate of 2.6 percent as of February.

The DBCC had slashed its interest rate forecast to a range of 4-4.5 percent from an earlier assumed range of 5.5-6.5 percent.

Beltran said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which is part of the inter-agency DBCC, wanted to further lower the interest rate forecast to 3-4 percent, but the fiscal sector would like to maintain some "elbow room."

"If interest rates are high, you'll have more expenditures, but if you lower it, you'll have less revenues," Beltran explained.

Because of lower interest rates, the government expects collections by the Bureau of Internal Revenue to decline from P784 billion to P765.9 billion this year, as taxes on T-bills were expected to fall from P45 billion to P30 billion.

Meanwhile, National Treasurer Omar Cruz shrugged off concerns that domestic interest rates were artificially low.

"As I've always said, the best gauge of the interest rate market is the bond market where we have established six so-called benchmark tenors already, where they trade by the billions and the bid-and-ask spreads are very thin," Cruz said.

His view on interest rates differed from that of Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, who had said local interest rates were "artificially low" and should move up a bit higher and stabilize at 1-2 percentage points above the inflation rate.

No Mindanao power shortage in '09, DOE says

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY has assured power users in Mindanao that there would be no shortage in the grid by 2009, as investors have committed some 320 megawatts (MW) in new capacity to address increasing demand.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that based on the DOE's 2006-2014 projections, the Mindanao grid would have enough power until mid-2009.

At least 100 MW of new capacity, however, would have to go on stream by then, with another 100 MW needed by 2010, another 150 MW each year by 2011, 2012 and 2013, and an additional 200 MW by 2014.

For these additional capacity requirements, he said some investors had already committed to either put up new power plants or expand or upgrade existing ones.

The DOE said a consortium led by Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc. and the Electricity Generating Public Company of Thailand would be building a 200-MW coal-fired power plant in Mindanao before year's end.

Also, the Aboitiz group had proposed a 60-MW hydropower facility in Southern Mindanao, which should be operational by 2009.

The repair of the Balo-i Flood Control Project should likewise boost by 60 MW the capacity of the National Power Corp.'s Agus 2 hydropower plant in Lanao province.

"I wish to allay any apprehensions that power shortage is happening soon in Mindanao. Together with the private sector, we are putting in place the needed capacity requirements," Lotilla said.

According to data from the DOE, other proposed projects in Mindanao included the 21.8-MW Minergy diesel plant expansion in Northern Mindanao by 2010, the 50-MW Mindanao 3 geothermal project in Northern Mindanao by 2010, and the 200-MW MG Mining and Energy Corp. coal-fired power plant in Southern Mindanao by 2012.

Inflation hit 4-yr low in Feb

From page B1

do Tetangco Jr. said yesterday the latest inflation report "further shows improving supply conditions and greater capacity of the economy in harnessing domestic liquidity to support productive activities."

"With the encouraging inflation outlook, it also affirms greater elbow room for setting monetary policy," Tetangco added.

Inflation is the rate of change in the weighted average prices of goods and services purchased by consumers. The changes are weighed based on their corresponding share to the consumer price index (CPI) or the standard basket of goods and services that a typical household consumes.

The actual inflation rate for February was even lower than the BSP's forecast range of 3 to 3.6 percent for the period.

"The reason for the sharp deceleration is that fuel pump prices were reduced in February, and the supply of fruits and vegetables—which was affected by cold weather—has normalized," said Victor Abola, an economist at the University of Asia & the Pacific.

"Besides, the reference base (February 2006) had a high CPI due to the additional 2 percentage VAT (which took effect) that month," he said.

Price decreases in food items such as fruits, vegetables and meat pushed down the overall consumer prices by -0.1 percent in February from 0.3 percent in January, while lower adjustments in electricity rates and reductions in the prices of LPG, kerosene, gasoline and diesel also contributed to the downtrend, the NSO reported.

Annual inflation rate in the National Capital Region slowed to 2.4 percent in February from 4 percent in January. Also, the rate outside the NCR softened to 2.7 percent from 3.7 percent as the inflation index for all commodity groups slowed down during the month.

Excluding selected food and energy items, the NSO reported that national core inflation rate was also slower at 3 percent in February from 3.9 percent in January.

Core inflation is an alternative measure of inflation that removes certain components from the CPI basket—particularly those that are subject to volatile price movements, such as food and energy—and whose price changes are not within the control of monetary policy.

In the Philippines, core inflation excludes rice, corn, fruits and vegetables, as well as fuel items like gas, LPG, kerosene, gasoline and diesel—which together represent 18.4 percent of the CPI basket.

For this year, the government hopes to keep the country's inflation rate to within 4 to 5 percent.

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MARKET MASTERS CONFERENCE
3RD MARKET MASTERS CONFERENCE
BRAND & TRADE INITIATIVES
MARCH 21, 2007, 9:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.
BALLROOM, MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL, MAKATI CITY

Session 1: How To Use Blue Ocean Strategy To Develop and Launch New Products That Will Make Competition Play Catch Up
Josiah Go, Chairman, Mansmith and Fielders, Inc.

Session 2: How To Strategize Thru A Brand Portfolio of Products
Dondi Gomez, Category Director for Skin and Deodorants and Head of Marketing Training, Unilever Philippines

Session 3: How To Formulate Your Brand DNA for Success
Weena Pineda, VP-Corporate Marketing, Splash Holdings

Session 4: How To Benefit From In-Store Consumer Behavior
Benedicto Cid, Managing Director, AC Nielsen Philippines

Session 5: How Suppliers Can Maximize Retail Investment
Wilson Lim, President, Abenson, Waltermart & ElectroWorld Group and Joanne Lim, Managing Director, Waltermart Supermarket

As in previous years, the entire net proceeds of this conference will go to the various advocacies of Mansmith like MarkProf, CPT-CSA,etc. Please support these worthwhile causes while you learn from Mansmith's 3rd Market Masters Conference.

Regular Rate: P 6,888 (if paid until March 9, 2007) **Onsite Rate:** P 7,888 (if paid after March 9, 2007)

For inquiries, please look for Alice Torres at telefax nos. (63-2) 722-2318 / 727-7142, text 0920-9223732 or email us at info@mansmith.net.

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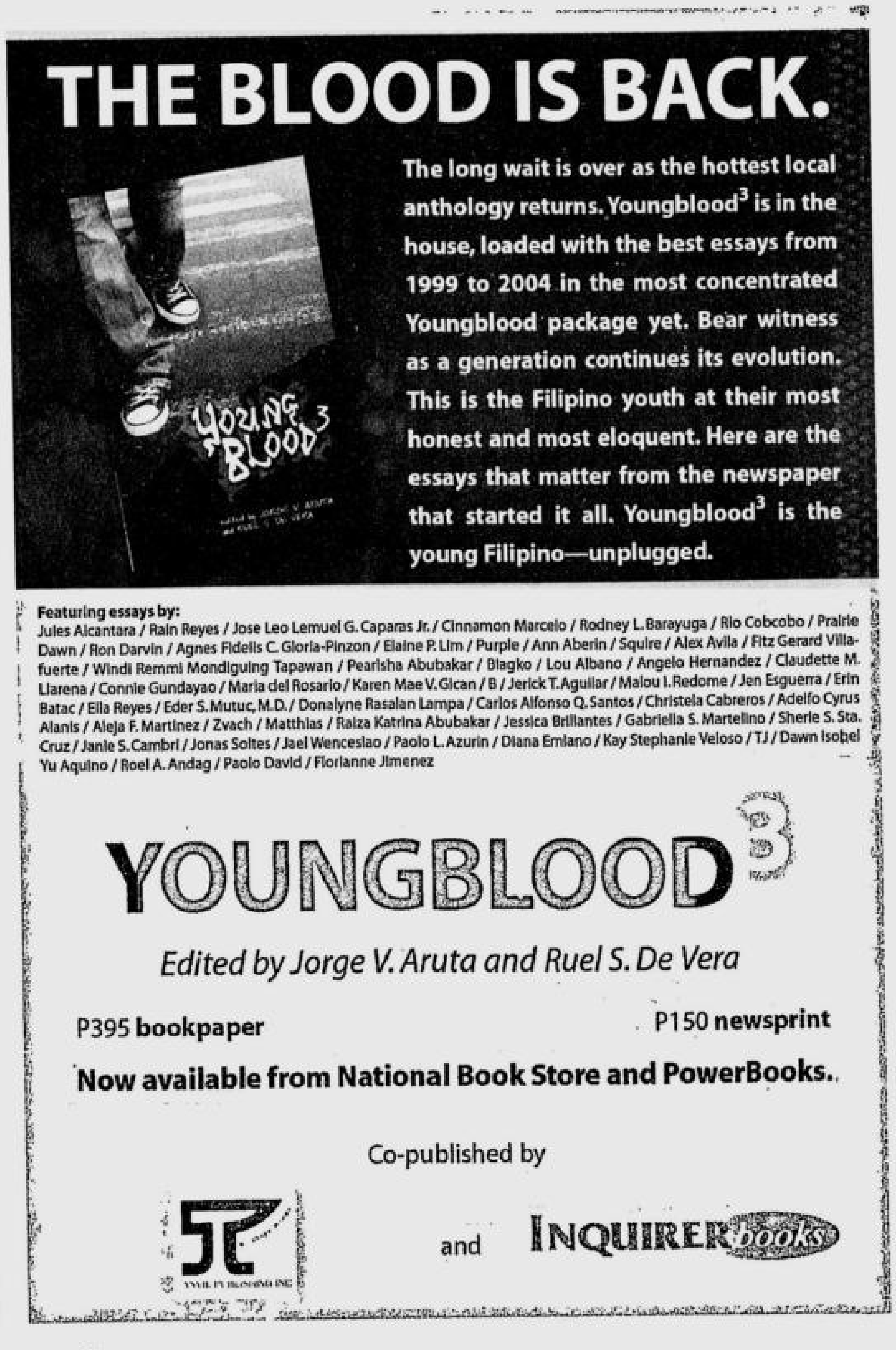
THE BLOOD IS BACK.

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Angeles City	Holiday Inn	Feb. 27	12p-5:30p
Cebu	Marriott Hotel	March 3 - 4	10a-4p
Davao	Marco Polo Hotel	March 10 -11	10a-4p

IMPORTANT! Please don't forget to bring all of the following:

- Visa Screen Certification
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Office of the President
BCDA
Bases Conversion and Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Service Vehicles for Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP)

The **Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA)**, through the 2006 Corporate Budget approved by its governing Boards intends to apply the sum of **Three Million Pesos and 00/100 (3,000,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments for the **Supply and Delivery of Service Vehicles for Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP).** Bids received in excess of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening:

Supply and Delivery of Service Vehicles for SCTEP	**Php 3,000,000.00**

The **BCDA** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the **Supply and Delivery of Service Vehicles for SCTEP**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions To Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from **BCDA** and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below on **March 08, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00) on March 08 – 15, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**. The method of payment will be in the form of cash, manager's check or cashier's check. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The **BCDA** will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties on **March 16, 2007, 2:00 PM**. at Operations Conference Rooms A & B, 2F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st Street, Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Tel No. (02) 816-6666.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **10:00 Noon on March 26, 2007.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in accordance with the following schedule:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract
Cash, Manager's check, Cashier's check, certified check, Bank Draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One Percent (1%)
Bank guarantee	One & a half percent (1 & ½%)
Surety Bond	Two & a half percent (2&1/2%)

In case the proposed bidder opts to accompany his/her bid with security in cash, he/she should pay directly to the BCDA Treasury and Investments Department and place the official receipt inside the envelope which contain all the other bid envelopes. Late bids shall be received only for purposes of marking and recording the time at the BCDA Central Receiving and Releasing Section but shall not be accepted by SBAC.

Bid opening shall be on **March 26, 2007 at 2:00 PM** at Operations Conference Rooms A & B, 2F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st Street, Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. The reference time or clock that will be followed shall be the computer time of the BCDA Central Receiving and Releasing Section. Bids will be opened and evaluated accordingly.

Bidder shall submit the following requirements in order to secure the complete set of the bidding documents:

- Letter of Intent (LOI) to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid addressed to the Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and submitted to:

  SBAC Secretariat:
  Ms. Nancy Paje

- Valid Certificate of Registration with Philippine - GEPS

BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Awards of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provision of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Nancy Paje at telephone no. 816-6666 loc. 122.

Bases Conversion & Development Authority (BCDA)
2F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st Street,
Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
Tel No. (02) 816-6666/Fax Nos. (02)816-0989/816-0996

(Sgd.) **Victor V. Zablan**
Chairman/Bids and Award Committee for SCT

(PDI - March 7, 2007)

A Philippine subsidiary of a Korean company is seeking qualified applicants for the following positions:

1. **ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** - At least ten (10) years experience in human resource and operational management. Graduate of any management or related course.
2. **MARKETING MANAGER** – At least ten (10) years experience in marketing and management in tourist related ventures. Graduate of any marketing or related course.
3. **DEVELOPMENT MANAGER** – At least ten (10) years experience in construction and development management, particularly large-scale infrastructure projects. Licensed civil engineer with management experience preferred.
4. **PROJECT MANAGER** –Construction manager with at least ten (10) years experience in the development of hotels and resorts. Graduate of any related degree, licensed civil engineer preferred.
5. **ADMINISTRATION STAFF** – College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
6. **MARKETING STAFF** – College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
7. **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STAFF** - College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
8. **ARCHITECT** – Licensed architect with at least five (5) years work experience.
9. **DRAFTSMAN** – At least three (3) years work experience with knowledge of Computer Aided Design. Graduate of any related degree.
10. **PARALEGAL** – At least five (5) years experience in contract work, legal housekeeping and in-house legal assistance. Graduate of a law degree an advantage.
11. **ACCOUNTANT** – Certified Public Accountant with at least three (3) years experience in accounting and auditing related work.
12. **SECRETARY** –Excellent computer skills, particularly MS WORD and EXCEL. Graduate of any college course, with pleasing personality.

ABILITY TO SPEAK AND WRITE KOREAN AN ADVANTAGE.

Please email your resumés, with a 2x2 ID picture, to Quisumbing.Torres@BakerNet.Com.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS ON MARCH 14, 2007.

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF RIZAL
Municipality of Morong
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Morong Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting qualified bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

	Project Cost
Improvement of San Jose-San Guillermo Road, Morong, Rizal	P 10,000,000.00
Construction/Improvement of Doña Ana-Yapak Road, Brgy. Lagundi, Morong, Rizal	3,000,000.00

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Issuance of Eligibility and Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes
February 28, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC	March 7, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC	March 13, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC

That as of bidding date, March 16, 2007, 10:00 AM, prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use for non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualifications of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Eligibility and documents shall be issued to applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to apply and payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of P500.00 in the form of Cash or Manager's check in favor of Municipality of Morong.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR). Only applicants who paid bid fees shall be allowed to attend the Pre-Bid Conference and submit Bid proposals.

The Municipality of Morong thru the Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or part thereof, or waived any defect contained therein and may accept the offer which it deems the lowest calculated responsive bid.

(Sgd.) Engr. CLAVERO T. PANTALEON
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 28 & March 7, 2007)

PNOC

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C & D / IAC Small, Sub-Category B, Specialty in Electrical Works or General Building - Building & Industrial Plant to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of the Direct Power Line Connection for SNGPF Admin Complex (Balance of Works)
EDC 07-047

The Approved Budget is PhP2,243,820.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days.

Eligibility forms may be secured from the Contracts Administration Group (c/o Maricar A. Garduce) starting March 7, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (PhP 200.00).

The eligibility documents must be submitted to the Contracts Administration Group not later than 2:00 P.M. of March 15, 2007. Bid documents shall be issued to eligible Contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (PhP1,000.00).

Site inspection will be conducted on March 22, 2007 and for the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on March 26, 2007, at 10.00 a.m. at 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, not later than 2:00 P.M. on April 12, 2007 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

Note: PNOC-EDC (Manila) Cashier Transactions are from 10:00 am - 12:00 nn and 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm only.

(PDI–March 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
GIORGIO DI MARINO INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 11/F T-Tower Bldg., 5040 P. Burgos St., Makati City	Besim Ozkan Mangitay	Vice President
HENG TONG INT'L HUMAN RESOURCES & RECRUITMENT AGENCY CO. 1991-B San Juan St., Brgy. 036, Pasay City	Dingxin Pu	Assistant Manager
ROCHE (PHILIPPINES) INC. 2252 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Carlos Ugarte Justiniani	Finance Director
PRO V INTERNATIONAL (PHILIPPINES), INC. 37/F Ayala Ave., cor. H.V. Dela Costa St., Makati City	Robert Preston Berry Jr.	Country Manager
GLOBALHUB, INC. Suite 2301 Medical Plaza Ortigas, 25 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Geun No Park	Manager for Finance Operation
PIONEER LANGUAGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. LGII Globe Tower Plaza I, Pioneer Highlands, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City	Erdal Kolca	Program Supervisor
MITSUBISHI CORPORATION 52/F PBCom Tower 6795 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Hiroshi Nashimoto	Manager–Corporate Division Manager
SCUBA WORLD, INC. 1181 Pablo Ocampo St., Malate, Manila	Cindy Jennifer Hall	Dive Guide
SCUBA WORLD, INC. 1181 Pablo Ocampo St., Malate, Manila	Glen Jackson	Boat Manager
SCUBA WORLD, INC. 1181 Pablo Ocampo St., Makati City	Storm-Lee Woodhouse	Boat Manager
SCUBA WORLD, INC. 1181 Pablo Ocampo St., Makati City	Mailyn Soraia Schwarz Sheqiri	Boat Manager/ Dive Guide
CBC IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING LTD. CO. Rm. 602-A Taytana Plaza, Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo, Manila	Shangjian Qiu	Operation Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI- March 7, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

MESSAGE OF THANKS

On the fortieth day of **Inay's** joining our Creator and her husband, **Rufino C. Gotanco, Sr.**, we, the family of the late

PATRICIA M. GOTANCO

18 March 1915 - 27 January 2007
of Cajidiocan, Romblon and Sta. Mesa, Manila

thank our relatives, friends and associates who sent flowers, mass cards and messages of sympathy, and joined us in our time of sorrow.

Rey & Chel, Roger, Chris, Tancio & Mila, Hati & Joey, Chayong & Jun, and **Inay's** grandchildren and great-grandchildren

---

FREDERICK "FRED" ELLAM

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on March 04, 2007 at the age of 60.

His bereaved mother, **Laurette**; children, **Paul** & **Debbie**; grandchildren, **Keele, Sadie** & **Robbie**; brothers, **Raymond** & **David**; sisters, **Margaret Dailey** and **Jacqueline** & **David Todd**; fiancé, **Patricia Adlawan**; special friends, **Jings** & **Olive de Guzman, Wopsy** & **Agile Zamora, Edgar Glinoga**; nephews and nieces request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at **St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church, Magallanes Village, Makati City.**

Final Mass will be on March 11, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. Cremation at 1:00 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Chapels Crematory, Guadalupe, Makati City shall follow immediately after.

"Aunt Mary, please take care of my brother in heaven" ... **Raymond**

In Loving Memory

on the

Ninth Death Anniversary

of

FILOMENA L. CONTRERAS

November 22, 1906 – March 7, 1998

Holy Masses will be offered today, March 7, 2007 at the following:

Santuario de San Antonio	Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 AM
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori	Magallanes Village, Makati City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of the Abandoned	Sta. Ana, Manila	6:30 AM
Santuario de San Jose	Greenhills, San Juan	7:15 AM
Mary The Queen	Madison Street, San Juan	7:00 AM
St. Joseph Parish	Proj. 3, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Immaculate Concepcion Parish	Lantana St. Cubao, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Christ the King Seminary	E. Rodriguez, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church	Lipa City, Batangas	6:00 AM
San Sebastian Cathedral	Lipa City, Batangas	6:00 AM
Don Bosco Parish Church	Pasay Road, Makati City	7:00 AM

We, her Family, request relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

ATTY. ARMANDO JUSTINIANI DELA ROSA

Died: February 23, 2007
Burial: February 28, 2007

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 23, 2007

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Justice VICENTE GARMA ERICTA

February 3, 1915 – February 18, 2007

Wish to express our sincerest appreciation to all who spent time with us at his wake, attended his funeral, sent flowers and spiritual bouquets, and in countless ways, condoled us in our sorrow.

We are deeply grateful.

Maria Ibarra Ovejera

Tarlac Schools Division Superintendent (Ret)
June 30, 1932 - March 2, 2007

Maria peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 74. Her bereaved husband, ETHELWOLDO; children, Emmeline and Joy, Marivic and Roly, and Bong; grandchildren Tricia, Aaron, Allan and Alynnae, relatives and friends request everyone to join our prayers for her eternal rest and everlasting happiness with the Lord.

Her remains lie in state at 58 Zamora St., Camiling, Tarlac. A mass will be held at St. Michael de Archangel Parish church on Saturday, March 10, 2007 at 8:00 A.M. Interment will follow at Camiling Memorial Park, Camiling, Tarlac.

Death Notice

BENJAMIN "Burabo" C. REYES

Joined our Creator on March 1, 2007 at the age of 79.

His body lies in state at 41 Sitio Sto. Rosario, Victoria, Tarlac. Interment will be on March 10, 2007, 8 a.m. at Victoria Memorial Cemetery.

TAN CHUNG KIAT

Joined our Creator on March 3, 2007 at the age of 82.

His body lies in state at Anita V. Funeral Homes, Santiago Boulevard, General Santos City.
Interment will be on Monday, March 12, 2007 at General Santos Chinese Cemetery.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family and relatives of the late

DRA. FELICITAS (Sis. Fely) RAMOS BUMANLAG

(March 17, 1930 – February 25, 2007)

wish to express our sincerest appreciation to all who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, visited, attended the funeral rites and in countless ways, condoled us in our moment of grief. We are deeply grateful.

In Loving Memory

June 3, 1948 – March 7, 2005
We remember our beloved Papa and Lolo

RICARDO "Ding" C. CRUZ

We miss your hearty laugh, your playful spirit & your devotion to us! Your death is still a great mystery but we know that you are at peace with God and his angels. We love you!
Edna, Trisha, Willy & Sabine, Lally, Chris & Lance, Martin and Marcus

Masses will be offered at:
Christ The King Church, Greenmeadows, Q.C.
6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Miranila, Q.C.
5:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
San Bartolome de Novaliches Parish,
6 a.m., 12:15 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos.: 712-3001 • 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
Mariano Vidal	Chapel-7	To be announced later	To be announced later
Remo Lavadia	Chapel-E	7 March 11:30 a.m	Paz Crematory

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Cagayan Valley Medical Center
Regional Tertiary, Teaching and Training Hospital
Carig, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan
Tel. No. 844-1410 or 1810

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Delivery & Supply of Medical and Surgical Supplies, Medical Equipment, Generator Set and PABX

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder projects:

Name of Project	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
Bidding for Medical/Surgical Supplies	16,900,000.00
Bidding for Medical Equipment	18,186,000.00
Purchase of 1 Generator Set, 625KVA/500 KW, 0.8 Power Factor, 240 V, 3 Phase, 60 HZ, with Control Measurements and Accessories Brand New, US Brand Open Type	6,000,000.00
Purchase of PABX Machine with installation	2,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bid Conference(s), Evaluationol Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Medical/Surgical Supplies and Medical Equipment	Generator Set and PABX
Advertisement	March 1-7, 2007	March 15-21, 2007
Issuance of Bid Documents	March 8-14, 2007	March 22-28, 2007
Pre-bid Conference	March 15, 2007, 9:00 a.m. CVMC Multi-purpose Hall	March 29, 2007, 9:00 a.m. CVMC Conference Hall
Submission and Opening of bids	March 29, 2007	April 12, 2007

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of two thousand five hundred pesos (P2,500.00). The method of payment will be cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC)
(Sgd.) **EMMANUEL F. ACLUBA, MD, MHA, Chief of Hospital**
Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City
(078) 844-0033, 1810, 1410
(078) 844-3789

(Sgd.) **RAMON P. GONZALEZ, MD, FPCP**
BAC, Chairman

(PDI - March 7, 2007)

BOHOL-I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Fax No. (038) 508-8095, Tel. No. (038) 508-0084, 508-0085

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2007-01

The **BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (BOHECO-I)** thru 5% reinvestment and general fund intends to procure various electrical materials and equipment to be used in our coverage area.

Lot A – Steel Poles, 450Mpa (For Consignment Basis)
Lot B – Line Hardwares
Lot C – Clamp, Hotline, AB chance
Lot D – G.E. Circuit Breaker w/ Enclosure
Lot E – Conductors
Lot F – Lightning Arrester and Fuse Cutout
Lot G – Fuse Link, Removable Head, Made in U.S.A.
Lot H – Distribution Transformer, 7620/240/480V (For Consignment Basis)
Lot I – Distribution Transformer, 7620/120/240V (For Consignment Basis)
Lot J – Timer Switch, 240V
Lot K – Test Block & 3-phase kwhr meter, surplus
Lot L – Current Transformer (CT) for metering
Lot M – Potential Transformer (PT) for metering
Lot N – Loadlogger
Lot O – 69KV Circuit Switcher, complete set, surplus

Sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the above-mentioned materials will be received by **BOHECO-I** at its main office in Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol on or before March 19, 2007 at 2:30 P.M. at which time and place said proposal would be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

The interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from **BOHECO-I** Main Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (Php2,000.00).

(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. ITABLE**
General Manager

(PDI–March 7, 2007)

ERRATUM

In the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid of **Calbayog City Water District** published last **March 5, 2007**, the Total Bid Price stated on No. 3 of its conditions should be **P790,000** inclusive of taxes, and not as published.

Our apologies.

SPEECH OF SUCCESS

The Wilma Cruz Tapalla Academe of Speech and Personality recently conducted "Speech for Success", a half day course on mastering impeccable speech for career success, on Feb. 25 at the Astoria Plaza in Ortigas facilitates by Ms. Valerie Cruz Tapalla. Speech for Success is one of the many courses the WCT Academe offers on Speech, Etiquette and Personality Development. For summer, they offer a special Speech and Etiquette Camp for Children, Teens and Adults. You may contact WCT Academe at Tel. nos. 723-4118 / 726-8768 or thru Trifocal Media Solutions at mobile no. 0917-8833023 or email trifocalmedia@gmail.com.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of RIZAL
MUNICIPALITY OF ANGONO
Office of the Mayor
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The MUNICIPALITY OF ANGONO through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with the classified by the Philippines Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible to bid for the hereunder contract
Name of Project CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD

LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
Brgy. Mahabang Parang, Angono, Rizal	Php 6 000 000 00
Brgy. Poblacion Itaas, Angono, Rizal	Php 8 000 000 00
Brgy. San Isidro, Angono, Rizal	Php 5 000 000 00
Brgy. Kalayaan, Brgy. San Isidro and Brgy. San Vicente, Angono, Rizal	Php 10 000 000 00

Contract Duration 90 Calendar Days/Project
Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC and have key personnel and equipment listed in the Eligibility Forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.
All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).
The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	March 12, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	March 14, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	March 16, 2007 (3:00 p.m.)
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 19, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 19, 2007
6. Pre Bid Conference	March 21, 2007 (2:00 p.m.)
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 23, 2007 (3:00 p.m.)

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator upon their submission of LOI and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 to the Municipality of Angono, Rizal Cashier.
Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.
The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount Php 3,000.00 to Municipality of Angono, Rizal Cashier.
The Municipality of Angono, Rizal assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by
(Sgd.) NANCY I. UNIDAD
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 7, 2007)

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...
Philippine Port Authority B6
Supreme Court A22

CALL POEA
24-HOUR HOTLINES
722-1144 or 722-1155

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on March 22, 2007, 2:00 p.m., 12th Floor, Suite 5, Executive Lounge of the DBP Head Office, Sen.Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (sq.m.)	LOCATION	Minimum Bid
REAL ESTATE				
METRO MANILA				
CWB-1a	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No. V-57731) with imp	1,000	Tugalog St., Veinte Reales, Valenzuela City	P 3,134,000.00
CWB-1b	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No. V-57732) with bldg. & imp.	375	Tugalog St., Veinte Reales, Valenzuela City	P 1,183,900.00
BULACAN				
AM-RT-01	Residential-industrial lot (TCT No. T-121757) with 1-storey factory/shop bldg	500	599 Border Road Ext. Cordero Subd., Bo Lambakin, Marilao	P 1,594,000.00
CWB-2b	2-adjoining vacant residential lots [TCT Nos. T-422072 (M) & T-422073 (M)]	300	Lot 33 & 35 Blk. 3, Carnation St. Graceville Subd., Bo. Caretas, San Jose Del Monte City	P 420,000.00
CWB-2c	2-adjoining vacant agro-residential lots [TCT Nos. T-422070 (M) & T-422071 (M)]	19,000	Bo. Bulac, Sta. Maria, Bulacan	P 4,849,000.00
CAVITE				
AM-RP-02	House and lot (TCT No. T-1131445)	32	Lot 8 Block 10 Philhomes Ville I Subd., Toclong, Kawit	P 192,000.00
CWB-2a	Vacant residential lot (TCT T-49242)	300	Lot 37 Blk. 1, Session Road, Tagaytay Monte Vista Subd., Brgy. Sungay, Tagaytay City	P 1,530,000.00
DAVAO				
AM-RT-03	3-parcels of residential lots (TCT Nos. T-369591, T-369590 & T-369589) with bldg. & imp.	2,235	Tacunan Road, Calalunan Grande, Davao City	P 3,843,750.00
PAMPANGA				
AM-JA-04	508 vacant titled residential lots	23,889	Brgy. Telebastagan, San Fernando City	P 19,111,200.00
QUEZON				
AM-JA-05	2-parcels of agro-residential lots (TCT Nos. T-20548 & T-20549) with bldg. & imp.	6,284	Bo. Comon, Infanta	P 1,200,000.00
QUIRINO				
AM-DE-06	3-parcels of agro-residential lot (TCT T-19)	73,344	Brgy. Villamor, Cabarroguis	P 1,650,100.00

(CHATTELS - Sale on "as is where is basis")

CODE NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (sq.m.)	LOCATION	Minimum Bid
AM-JA-07	Various machinery and equipment for alkali-ion/electrolytic water treatment		Brgy. Natividad, Pangil, Laguna	P 6,673,000.00
AM-ML-08a	1-unit boltformer type machine, Model CD-50		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 302,000.00
AM-ML-08b	1-unit hydraulic trough & infeed thread rolling machine		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 89,100.00
AM-ML-08c	1-unit thread rolling machine, Model DG-30		La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	P 52,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, Ground Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566/893-7172 or 818-9511 locals 2158/2159/2166 for Code starting with AM and 920-4781 for CWB.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI—March 6 & 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Professional Regulation Commission
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Professional Regulation Commission, with address at P. Paredes cor. N. Reyes St. (formerly Morayta St.), Sampaloc, Manila, hereby invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

Items to bid for 2007 requirements	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Venue of Pre-bid Conference	Date/Venue of Submission and Opening of Bids
Security Services for Central and Regional Offices	P8,048,280.00	March 16, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. PRC Conference Rm. 2nd Floor, Main Bldg.	March 29, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. PRC Conference Rm. 2nd Floor, Main Bldg.

Only bidders registered with the Electronic Procurement Service for procurement of goods and services shall be allowed to participate in the bidding process. Bidders may obtain the list of the registration requirements for procurement of goods and services at the Office of the BAC Chairman, Commissioner Renato B. Valdecantos, 2nd floor, PRC Main Bldg., starting on March 7, 2007. The deadline for the submission of Registration Requirements shall be on March 19, 2007 at 5:00 in the afternoon.

Bid forms and the Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained at cost by interested bidders starting on March 8, 2007 from the Office of the BAC Chairman.

The PRC Bids and Awards Committee shall screen the eligibility of prospective bidders based on their compliance with the eligibility requirements on a pass/fail basis, evaluate, and post-qualify bids based on a set of criteria of responsiveness to the Commission's requirements.

All particulars relative to the registration, eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids, and awards of contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA), and its Implementing Rules and Regulations as amended.

The prospective bidder's largest completed contract should be fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract or should have completed at least three similar contracts within the last three (3) years and the aggregate contract amounts should be equivalent to at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC of the project to be bid.

The Commission reserves the right to verify the veracity of any information or authenticity of any document submitted in the course of bidding and to undertake ocular inspection of offices and facilities of bidders. It likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality therein, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the PRC. It shall not assume any resposibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **COMMISSIONER RENATO B. VALDECANTOS**
Chairman Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--March 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Caraga Administrative Region
Division of Surigao del Sur
Tandag
(086) 211-4375 – Telefax

DepED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dep-Ed, Division of Surigao del Sur, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Supply and Delivery of School Furniture

Package No.	Particulars	Quantity (All Wood)			Location	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Contract Duration
		Tables	Chairs	Armchairs			
Package A	Elementary Table & Chairs and Elem. Armchairs	566	1138	1,800	Surigao del Sur	2,258,800.00	120 CD
Package B	Secondary Armchairs			3,022	Surigao del Sur	2,266,500.00	120 CD

Prospective Bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activites is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 14-20, 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 21, 2007
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	April 2, 2007 @ 10:00 am
4. Bid Evaluation	April 3, 2007
5. Post-qualification Evaluation	April 4, 2007
6. Preparation of Resolution to Award	April 9-10, 2007
7. Issuance of Notice of Award	April 11-12, 2007
8. Contracting	April 13-16, 2007
9. Issuance of Notice to Proceed	April 17, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P2,500.00** to the Dep-Ed, Division Office Cashier.

(Sgd.) **TEOFILA G. CABATUAN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–March 7 & 13, 2007)

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS
Committee on Disposal of Real Properties

INVITATION TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas invites all interested parties to bid for the following real estate properties:

	Location	TCT No. New	TCT No. Old	Area	Description	Minimum Bid Price
	QUEZON CITY					
1	Laguna St.,Magsaysay, Bago Bantay	N-296306	N-159631	226.2	Res'l w/ 305 sq.m. Imp	4,380,000
	PARAÑAQUE CITY					
2	cor. Agatha & Jade Sts Raymondville Exec Village	169953	82400	206	Residential lot	865,000
	RIZAL					
	Antipolo City					
3	B17 L1 Town & Country Estates	R-40573	332636	354	Residential lot	1,699,200
4	P. Oliveros St., San Roque 1/	R-40960	N-105098	1000	Res'l w/ 55 sq.m. Imp	3,995,000
	San Mateo					
5	80 Gen Luna St., Ampid	415295		1,844	School Site	21,670,000
6	*Tierra Monte 4-A & B*	216 lots 13 lots		50 to 435 sq.m. 50 to 152 sq.m.	Residential lots House and Lots	P800- P2,200/sq.m. P2,500-P4,100/sq.m.
	Taytay					
7	Lot 9 Brgy. Sta. Ana	703764	516316	746	Res'l w/ 291 sq.m. Imp	1,792,000
	BAGUIO CITY					
8	VIP Villas, Green Valley Subd.	T-32102 -04	T-91328-30	4,050	Vacation Villas	35,550,000
	BATANGAS					
	Lipa City					
9	Lot 1309-D Brgy Balintawak	T-151248	143155	251.50	Res'l w/ 30 sq.m. Imp	583,000
10	Lot 1202-A-1 Brgy. Sabang	T-151251	146399	152	Res'l w/ 56 sq.m. imp	457,000
	Laurel					
11	Poblacion 5	T-107339-40	10314-42	847	Res'l w/ 128 sq.m. imp	675,000
	Tanauan City					
12	21 Interior Banjo East-Darasa	T-107347	T-104167	150	Res'l w/ imp	102,000
13	316 Tinurik-Mabini Brgy. Rd, Mabini	T-107351	T-106071	358	Res'l w/ 70 sq.m. imp	311,000
14	Lot 2531 Brgy. Tinurik	T-110423	T-93605	9,394	Agro-Ind'l w/imp/pigry	4,059,000
	CAVITE					
	Vista de Loro Heights, Puerto Azul					
15	Unit 28A Bato-Bato Cluster	CT-1849	CT-1453	62.89	Res'l Condominium	2,515,600
	CATANDUANES					
	Brgy. Igang, Virac					
16	Twin Rock Beach Resort	15018-19	11849-50	16,300	Beach Resort	6,037,500
	LAGUNA					
	San Pablo City					
17	Blk 9, Lots 1& 2 Andal Subd.	T-54142 -43		272	Res'l lot w/ 94 sq.m imp	645,200
	CEBU CITY					
18	Legaspi cor. Zamora St., Pob	178379	144221	480	Com'l w/ 1090 sq.m. bldg	16,165,000
	NEGROS OCCIDENTAL					
	Bacolod City					
19	B2 L51, Sharina Heights Subd.	303484	201919	200	Residential	400,000
20	Bo. Mansilingan	282950		683	Residential	820,000
21	Purok Kalubihan, Mandalagan	282947		1,933	Residential w/ imp	870,000
22	Brgy. 30 (Poblacion) 2/	282948		300	Residential	540,000
	Cauayan					
23	Sitio Cario, Brgy. Calling 3/	229611		3,370	Res./Agr'l.	135,000
24	Brgy. Sibucawan, Isabela	226203		21.2953	Agricultural	1,278,000
	Hinigaran					
25	Moonnse Village, Brgy. III	226207		253	Res/1 stry hse.	297,000
26	Brgy. Narauis	229830		9,239	Agricultural	139,000
	Villa Angela Subd., Brgy. Pilar					
27	Block 10 Lot 2	226204		240	Vacant Res. Lot	72,000
28	Block 10 Lot 5	226206		240	Vacant Res. Lot	72,000
29	Block 10 Lot 6	226202		347	Vacant Res. Lot	121,000
30	Block 10 Lot 1	226201		240	Vacant Res. Lot	84,000
	Mansilingan					
31	Paglaum Village	282272		248	Residential	124,000
	Murcia					
32	Zone IV	185582		206	Res'l w/ 168 sq.m. Imp.	352,000
	Sipalay					
33	Brgy. Manlucahoc	226209		29,800	Agricultural	172,000
	Toboso					
34	Brgy. Salamanca	226208		24,245	Agricultural	194,000

1/ with net useable area of 779 sq.m. due to 3-meter easement along creek
2/ Occupied by three illegal settlers.
3/ Net useable area is 2,697 sq.m. after easement along Panay Gulf, planted with banana trees.

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished bid forms enclosed in sealed envelopes shall be on 21 March 2007, 10:00 A.M., at Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex, A.Mabini St., Malate, Manila. All bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission of bids at 5th Flr, Executive Business Center, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The Buyer is deemed to have inspected the property.
2. The sale of the properties shall be "As-is, Where-is" and the winning bidder shall undertake the responsibility to acquire and maintain peaceful possession and enjoyment of the property without seeking the assistance of the BSP.
3. The BSP reserves the right to withdraw any or all of the properties offered for sale at any time and to reject any or all bids or to waive any infirmity found therein, or to accept such offers as will be considered advantageous to the BSP.
4. Prices are subject to change without prior notice.
5. The Committee will immediately start accepting offers for negotiation, in the event of a failed bidding, and will continue to accept offers through the Asset Management Department. However, the Committee may at its discretion, elect to conclude the negotiation immediately after failure of bidding whenever there is a highest complying offeror ascertained.
6. Offerors at the Public Bidding must tender a BID BOND equivalent to 10% of the offered price and offerors under the negotiated sale basis must submit an EARNEST MONEY equivalent to 10% of the negotiated price either in CASH or CASHIER's/MANAGER's CHECK payable to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall form part of the consideration once the offer is approved.

Complete description of the properties, rules and regulations on the bidding procedures and the prescribed bid forms are available for a minimal fee of P50.00 at the Asset Management Department, Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg. through the following:

	Direct Line	Trunk Line: 524-70-11
Ma. Geraldine Tarlengco / Juliet Villanueva Cynthia Samonte/ Joan Rosales/ Walter Garcia	523-34-86	loc. 2857
Al Mendoza / Naida Santos Mancris Gutlierez / Erick Ramos	524-34-20	2381

MELPIN A. GONZAGA
Committee Chairman

(PDI–March 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Cordillera Administrative Region
DIVISION OF IFUGAO
Lagawe, Ifugao
Tel. # 074-382-2102, Fax No. (074) 382-2102

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), of the Division of Ifugao, invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006
Location : Various Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Division of Ifugao
Funding Source : Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the General Appropriation Act CY 2006
Contract Duration : 120 calendar days from the date of acceptance of Notice to Proceed

District/School	Set of 1 Table and 2 Chairs		Armchairs		Teachers Table
KIANGAN 13 selected schools	Grade I Grade II Grace III	189 176 96	Grade V and VI	51	14
ALFONSO LISTA 2 National High Schools			2nd Year 3rd & 4th Year	126 108	4
LAMUT 3 National High Schools			1st Year 3rd Year	253 42	5
BANAUE 16 Selected Elem. Schools and 2 Nat'l. High Schools	Grade I Grade II Grade III Grade IV	173 118 63 30	Grade V and VI 1st Year	120 187	16
TOTALS		845		887	39

NOTE: Details are indicated in Section VII - Schedule of Requirements in the Bid Documents

Bidders are required to submit bid for the complete quantity of all the furniture items intended for the district/schools listed above.

A complete sets of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting March 12, 2007 to March 21, 2007 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM upon submission of Letter of Intent and payment to the Division Cashier of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand (Php3,000.00) Pesos.

Sealed bids, together with the bid security of not less than two percent (2%) of the total bid amount and samples of the furniture items offered must be delivered to the Office of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Division Office, Lagawe, Ifugao, not later than 10:00 A.M. on April 2, 2007, at which time, place and date, bids will be opened for reading in public in the presence of bidders or their authorized representative.

Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held at the address indicated above on March 22, 2007 at 10:00 in the morning.

The DepEd Division Office of Ifugao reserves the right to reject any or all bids or part thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award the furniture package to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to the Department of Education.

(Sgd.) **FELIPE L. BALLITOC**
Chairman, Division Bids and Awards Committee

NOTED:
(Sgd.) **ESTELA L. CARINO**
Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
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Debut concert in PPO

WATCH THE FIRST-EVER debut performance of internationally-acclaimed pianist Cecile Licad with son Otavio Licad Meneses, as they grace the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) concert VII entitled "The Next Generation" on March 16, 8 pm at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' (CCP) Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (Main Theater).

Repertoire includes: Adam's Short Ride in a Fast Machine, Ravel's Concert in G Major and Faure's Pelléas Et Mélisande, Suite op. 80. Cecile and Otavio will perform Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos.

Known as the "musician's musician," Licad earned her international recognition as one of the youngest musicians to receive the prestigious Leventritt Gold Medal in 1981.

She studied under three great pedagogues of the famed Curtis Institute of Music: Rudolph Serkin, Seymour Lipkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski. She has appeared regularly with renowned orchestras like the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, and several others within North America.

Otavio Meneses was born to Cecile Licad and Brazilian cellist Antonio Meneses on Angust 29, 1987, in New York City. Named from the character from opera Don Giovanni, Otavio inherited his parent's outstanding talent and passion for music. He grew up with an affection towards Bach and an inclination towards classical music particularly Mozart's, Schubert's and Mendelssohn's.

Tickets are at P500/P750/P1000/P1500. Discounts are also available for students, senior citizens and groups. For inquiries, call Lilia Casasola-Januare at the CCP Marketing Department (8321125 loc. 1806) or the CCP Box Office (832-3704), Ticketworld at National Bookstore and Tower Records (891-9999) or visit www.culturalcenter.gov.ph

Surprises at the Car of the Year Awards Night

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

NO, I CAN'T TELL YOU WHICH won the Car of the Year (Coty) Philippines Award—not even the winners of the 11 categories and the four Special Awards. The victorious vehicles will be proclaimed tomorrow at the 3rd Car of the Year Awards Night at the Rockwell Tent in Makati. In the meantime, we hope that the suspense is building up and a guessing (not betting) game is underway.

Surely, there will be some surprises tomorrow night when the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), the nonprofit, nonstock organization of motoring media that runs the annual Coty Awards, announces the winners. Just like last year, when the Hyundai Getz 1.1, not the Honda Jazz, won the Subcompact Car of the Year trophy and the Mitsubishi Lancer 1.8 MX outscored both the Ford Focus and Mazda3 to bag the Compact Car of the Year award while the Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6, not the Toyota Fortuner, won the Entry-Level SUV of the Year award.

Not surprised

But you would not be surprised if you were to consider that Coty winners are chosen not because of popularity or beauty (although there is a Best in Overall Design Special Award) or sales. Rather, the choices are based on the results of quantitative and qualitative tests, the score sheets of which are tallied by the Cagi testing committee to get the results. These, in turn, are audited by Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV). All along, Cagi maintains its independence by not seeking or accepting financial aid from car manufacturers and not charging an entrance fee for cars to participate in Coty

> Coty winners are chosen not because of popularity or beauty

THE MAZDA Tribute 3.0 V6 won the 2005 Entry-Level SUV of the Year award.

Some people have asked about the Coty tests. For starters, entries that did not win in their respective categories the preceding year are excluded the following year unless they have undergone major engineering changes or installed new safety equipment.

In the quanti or instrumented test, each vehicle's acceleration and braking performance is measured by a state-of-the-art G-tech meter while being driven by a control group of professional test drivers.

Qualitative

In the qualitative test, each entry's driveability, suspension, handling, responsiveness, riding comfort, interior space, ergonomics, build quality, visibility, lights, safety features, turning radius, aircon and audio system performance, among others, are evaluated as it is driven seat-of-the-pants by motoring journalists who are experienced drivers on a predetermined six-kilometer route reflecting a realistic variety of driving conditions—steep uphill slopes, dips, off-camber turns, downhill twisties, fast and slow corners, straightaways and unpaved lanes.

The qualitative test is considered just as important, if not more important, than the instrumented test as it answers a prospective car buyer's practical questions about a car vis-à-vis its suggested retail price (SRP). After all, not all buyers give priority to how fast a car reaches 100 kph from standstill or what its top speed is. Moreover, Coty has the consumer in mind, not the hardcore tech-and-tuner car buff.

The price factor naturally comes into play here. Of course, you cannot expect an entry-level vehicle to be as solidly built or to have as many safety features and creature comforts as a premium vehicle. This is why Cagi has categorized entries according to price range as well as segment. Thus, the sport utility vehicle (SUV) segment is divided into Entry-Level, Luxury and Ultra-Luxury while small cars are categorized as subcompact or compact not according to engine displacement, but according to SRP.

Prepared

Another factor that comes into play when choosing the 11 category winners from which the Car of the Year emerges, is how well a vehicle is prepared by its manufacturer or distributor for Cagi's tests. If a much-used demo or media test-drive unit is to be entered, it stands a greater chance of winning in its category if it is tuned up first, restored to tiptop condition and rigorously checked for any flaw or defect that may turn Coty jurors off.

Unfortunately, not all take the time and effort to prepare their entries properly even though they are informed of the Coty test schedule well ahead of time. In fairness to these few, perhaps it's because all the units of the same model have been sold by the time it is scheduled for testing or their dealers refuse to lend their showroom units for Cagi's tests.

Whatever, Coty continues as an independent, consumer-oriented evaluation of production cars available on the market during the preceding year. It is not premised on popularity or sales. Quoting once again Matt Stone, executive editor of Motor Trend, the magazine that invented the Car of the Year, "Coty is no respecter of badge or pedigree; it's the car that counts."

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

Dark horse from Ingolstadt: the Audi A6

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE BUYERS IN THE LUXURY CAR market are a predictable lot. It seems when the Filipino has a load of cash to spend on a lavish European mid-size sedan, the choices are quite obvious. Sadly for many a buyer, it is often the badge that makes the sale, three pointed stars and propellers being the obvious choices of the moneyed masses.

This was the dilemma faced during the recent test session with the 2007 Audi A6, a car that is trying to break into the market segment bastion held by the current 5-Series and the E Class. Again, all these products have strengths and weaknesses but there is that tricky matter of brand perception that our contender from Ingolstadt has to overcome.

The two most important factors in the choice of a product in this particular category are delivered performance and relative luxury. Logically, everything in this segment has to meet certain levels of ability and poise yet it is in the balance of these where true value can be found. What needs to be done is to peel back the sheet metal of such cars and really see what they are worth as pure and simple automobiles.

A quick car

The A6 proves to be a quick car and is unexpectedly rapid from standing starts, especially when the 7-speed CVT transmission is left in the sportier virtual ratios. Yes, one can choose to shift in the popular +/- style these days using the column-mounted paddles but there is really no need to.

Prepare to be amused at how one point five tons of steel and polymer is propelled by an estimated 200 bhp and 300 Nm of torque—all this from just two-liters, a turbocharger and Audi's Fuel Stratified Injection system. Someone deserves a pat on the back here, as the choice of this particular engine and transmission combination is spot on.

Chassis and suspension are not the most performance-oriented in the market though. There is a solid feel that one expects from something so pricey but road holding seems to be secondary to the overall comfort of passengers.

Ride quality

The Audi A6's ride quality is right smack dab between what is purely plush and an altogether athletic setup. Steering is also relatively light and long. There is slight feedback from the road but nothing that will tire and overwhelm the pickiest of Sunday drivers. Compromises have definitely been made here, but ones that allow the car to be comfortably used by those who mostly choose to leave the steering wheel to someone else.

UNDERSTATED and underrated—a true dark horse

Cabin and controls are typical Audi with a cohesive theme that is quality sans flash. Do look elsewhere for interiors that are gaudily full of laminated wood, bright chrome and unidentifiable shiny bits that go "beep" in the dark. Drivers must also be aware of the slightly steep learning curve for the multimedia and driving systems interface. Ergonomic is the operative word here rather than intuitive; everything is really eventually at one's fingertips. Just read the manual first please, as your personal "Vorsprung durch Technik" (Advancement through technology) has its price.

All in all, the Audi A6 in 2.0-T FSI trim is a great way to get introduced to the luxury market segment. Reality will probably have these buyers looking elsewhere for more ostentatious vehicles reeking of luxury. Others will seek machines built for their pure driving purpose. In the middle of these extremes is this Audi, a vehicle that through calculated compromise could make a significant run in the market. Odds are, if the Filipino buyer miraculously suspends their brand biases we could have a winner here—if only by a nose.

UPGRADE to a pro license, please?

'Truckers' . . .

From page B12

The results

Now back to the fuel guzzling firetrucks. There were actually two types of Isuzu trucks driven here. The first was the firetruck cum mini dump truck, five-speed, six-ton, 4.3-liter Isuzu NPR. In terms of versatility, a truck driver couldn't ask for more. The NPR could also be seen during the typhoon season plucking fallen trees out of roads.

The other "truck" was the smaller, 2.8-liter NHR usually in service as a school or company shuttle.

Both trucks are CKD (completely knock down) units from Japan and are naturally aspirated.

The NHR is worth P915,000 (all in), while the NPR goes for P1.3 million. For such a price, Filipino drivers don't get the anti-lock brakes and the airbags, which are standard in Japan.

Arthur Balmadrid, Isuzu Philippines Corp vice president for corporate business, stressed that the ubiquitous Isuzu N-Series trucks have been bestsellers in Japan for 38 years, while IPC continues to dominate the light trucks market for 9 consecutive years primarily because of these trucks.

During the seminar in-between the runs, Isuzu technical experts revealed that the most fuel efficient speeds of its trucks fell between the 40 and 50 kph range. That would be no problem, .we thought, unless you were a fireman racing to get to the scene of the fire as fast as you can (imagine the driver thinking of fuel savings in that situation), or you were running along the North Luzon Expressway (the minimum legal speed limit of 60 kph would really suck.gas), or you were collecting toppled trees along the highway or garbage in the neighborhood (imagine doing that while running at 45 kph).

So, these were the day's results for a most unusual run:

Top finishers for the NHR van were Ronald Rey Delos Reyes of Auto Review/People's Journal who registered 6.64 km/liter during the first round and 16.24 km/liter on the second—for an impressive 59.09-percent improvement; Bam Olivares of The Daily Tribune (6.40 to 15.45 km/l—58.59 percent); Chris Labis of DHL (6.17 to 14.07—56.17 percent); Rommel Reyes of Meralco (7.76 km/l to 16.81 km/l—53.88 percent)

In the NPR category Vernon Sarne of Top Gear Magazine and Manila Times registered the biggest improvement at 38.78 percent (8.56 km/liter and 13.97 km/l); Jude Morte of REV Magazine and Business Mirror (7.92 to 12.26 km/l—35.42 percent); Lester Dizon of The Philippine Star/Motorcycle Magazine (9.41 to 12.50 km/l—24.75 percent); and Anjo Perez of Manila Bulletin/Cruising Magazine (9.22 to 11.88km/l—22.33 percent).

The most fuel-efficient NHR driver during the first round was Dino Directo of Manila Standard Today, who registered 11.52 km/liter, and Emmanuel Perez of Meralco (11.38 km/l). The most fuel-efficient first round drivers for the NPR Dump Truck were AJ Angeles of Meralco (11.73 km/l) and Nato Santos of PLDT (11.24 km/l). Winners received cash prizes, Isuzu premium items from Japan and commemorative Isuzu N-Series miniature trucks.

Unfortunately, not one of the cows in the fields ever did get to applaud the winners, let alone appreciate the proceedings. If only they were briefed before hand. Oh well, what do these grass-guzzling beasts that chew all day and do nothing but "moo the lawn" know about fuel economy, anyway?

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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Truckers that are not fuel guzzlers

Inquirer Motoring drives a mini dump truck in—of all places—the Batangas Racing Circuit. Want to hear something even more insane? It was done supposedly to save fuel!

By Tessa R. Salazar
Photos by Junep Ocampo

WHAT'S THE first thing you would do when you see a convoy of firetrucks racing on the highway like there wasn't a tomorrow? You get the hell out of the way, of course, because it could be someone's house that these trucks are desperately trying to save.

Okay, the rest of the story doesn't have anything to do with burning houses or saving lives. But at least, it has something to do with the firetrucks.

These behemoths were the actual subjects in an unusual driving test concocted by the Isuzu folks one hot Thursday morning.

The crazy idea actually started as a running joke among the motoring media—that someday Isuzu would have us test-drive trucks instead of the usual AUVs and pickups.

We never had an inkling that Isuzu would take it seriously, until we were given the invites that, indeed, on Feb. 22, we would be driving dump trucks that doubled as firetrucks used in small municipalities.

Never mind that our licenses restricted us from driving anything larger than Class 1 vehicles. Isuzu got around that legal impediment by making us drive literally in circles—along the confines of the 1.7-km Batangas Racing Circuit.

A series of test runs

And so, imagine us lining up at the BRC with our six-ton trucks ready for the starting gun. Even the cows grazing in the surrounding pastures thought it quite odd to see trucks instead of cars at the track.

What those foolish bovines didn't know, however, was that this was not a race. It was, actually, a series of test runs—with cash prizes at stake—to determine who saved the most diesel fuel on a truck. But come to think of it, if the cows learned what we were really doing, they would have laughed their udders off. How could you save fuel on a truck, I imagine them mooing, cowbells clanging.

At least, the motoring media had some good company to share in this extraordinary event, which was formally named the "Isuzu Eco Transport Drive." For one, Hiroyuki Ishizuka, manager of the engineering support department of Isuzu Motors Limited of Japan, did fly in from Japan-with the technical support team of Isuzu global operations composed of Kousei Terui, Tokihiro Eguchi and Tsuyoshi Tomoyama in tow. They were tasked to help the drivers, which included representatives from fleet clients such as Meralco, DHL, Asia Brewery, PLDT and Globe Telecom, go back to the basics of driving trucks for optimum fuel efficiency.

Mechanics

And since this was a fuel run and not a race, the trucks that the participants were to drive were each fitted with a P500,000 "fuel pet," a flow meter device attached to the fuel line that measured in real-time how much fuel (in cubic centiliters) was being consumed.

The participants were then instructed to drive "normally" around the BRC for one lap. After all participants had their turn at the wheel, they would then attend a fuel economy seminar to "reorient" their "normal" truck driving habits toward a more fuel-economy conscious way of driving. The same set of participants would then have another go at it at the wheel—this time applying what they learned during the seminar. The winning driver would be the one who registers the biggest difference—or the most marked improvement-between his or her normal driving and the post-seminar run. That is, in terms of fuel used.

Reasons

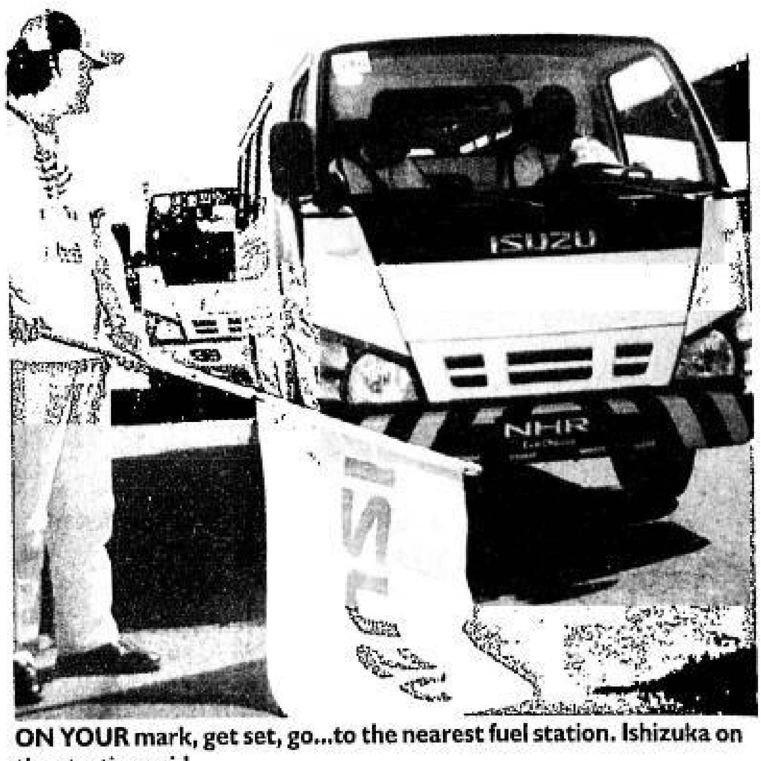
That sounded simple enough. So the nagging question had to be asked (attention: ignorant cows, must reading follows): Why use trucks for the fuel run, and not the usual cars, AUVs and SUVs? Technical experts at Isuzu gave us two convincing reasons: 1) Because Al Gore and some 2,500 climate scientists are putting the blame on the transport sector insofar as global warming is concerned; and, 2) The biggest carbon dioxide emitters in the transport sector are large vehicles with heavy loads that burn lots and lots of fossil fuels—trucks.

Isuzu added that addressing this environmental problem had been long overdue. Studies by the National Promotion Center of Global Warming Prevention Efforts show that the transport sector (20 percent) is second only to the industrial sector (30 percent) when it comes to contributing to the global greenhouse effect.

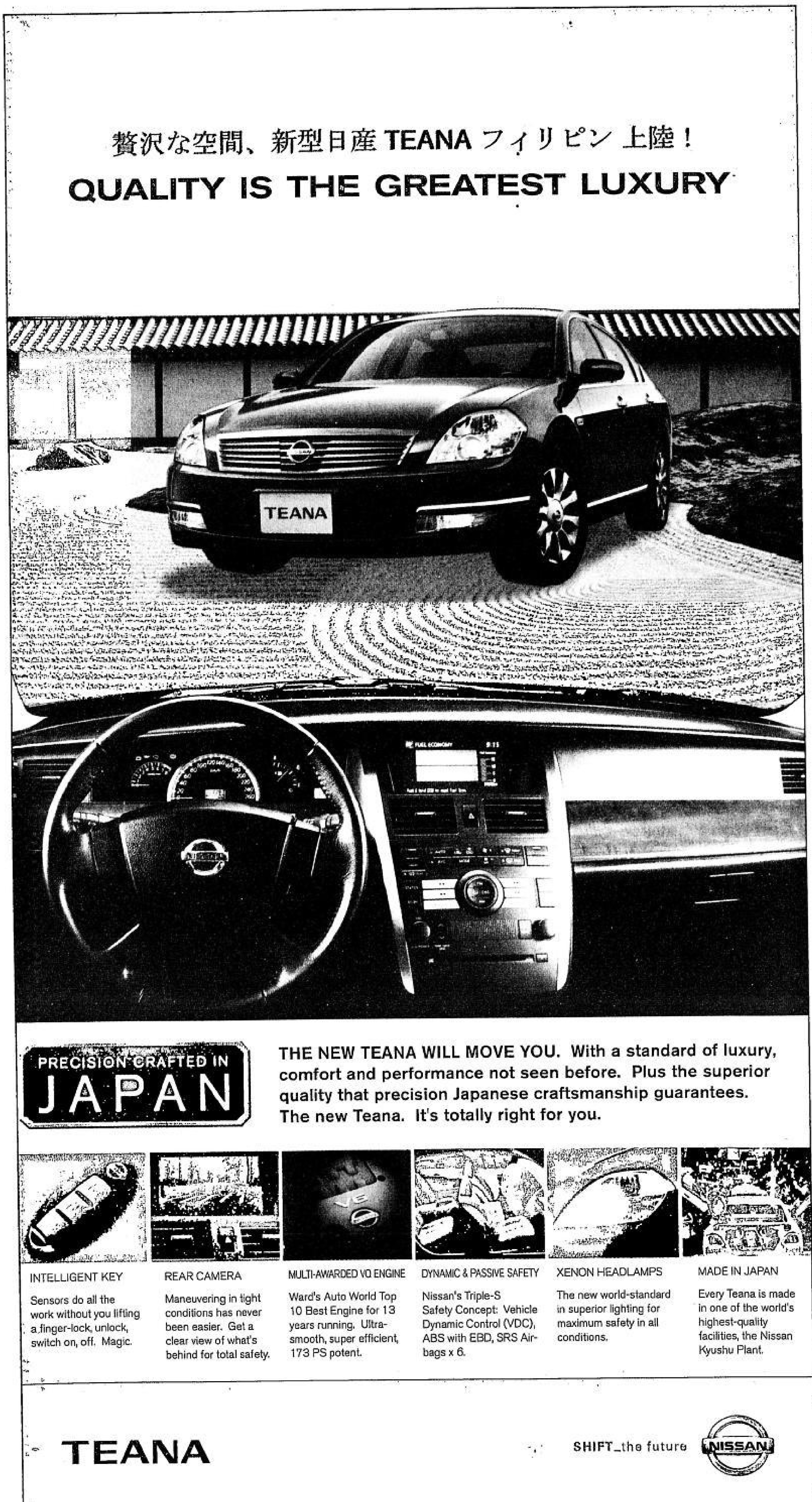
Isuzu Motors, for its part, has been aware of this problem for some time now, and for the past 12 years, in fact, has been conducting its Eco Transport Drive in Japan, Australia, Turkey and Malaysia.

Isuzu gave another reason to conduct fuel runs among trucks. Studies have also shown that the three top expenses for trucks, or for any vehicle for that matter, were (in ascending order): 1) tires and batteries at 11.2 percent; 2) vehicle maintenance at 16.4 percent; and, 3) fuel at 72.4 percent. Obviously, the goal for any fuel economy run was to bring down that 72.4 percent to a less frightening, less disturbing figure.

TRUCKERS/B11



ON YOUR mark, get set, go...to the nearest fuel station. Ishizuka on the starting grid



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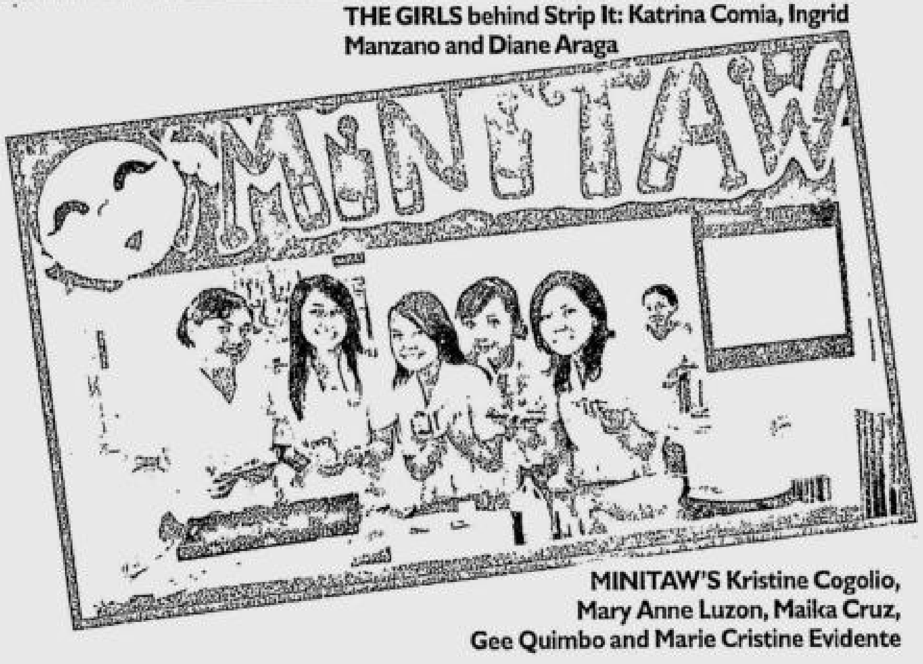
THE GIRLS behind Strip It: Katrina Comia, Ingrid Manzano and Diane Araga

MAYEN Go's Toes & Straps offers cute footwear like thongs, wedges and Roman sandals. Above: Mochilla's trendy and functional bags

Robinsons Malls has set up Entrep Corner, a venue for young business and entrepreneurship students to showcase their unique merchandise and services



MINITAW'S Kristine Cogolio, Mary Anne Luzon, Maika Cruz, Gee Quimbo and Marie Cristine Evidente

Young entrepreneurial ideas

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

YOUNG MINDS ARE BRILliant. They are fresh, candid and usually brimming with creative ideas. However, young people don't have a platform to showcase their intelligence and ingenuity. Thus, it's commendable that Robinsons Malls has set up the Entrep Corner, a homegrown developmental project that provides conducive venues in their malls for student entrepreneurs (usually 20 years old and below) to show their merchandise and services.

"It is our way of developing talents among the youth whom we see have great potentials and skills in the business," says Cornelio Mapa Jr., Robinsons general manager for commercial centers division.

To be part of the program, schools have to be invited to be part of Robinsons Malls' Entrep Corner based on pre-qualifications.

"These are usually colleges and universities which offer courses in Entrepreneurship, Business Management, Economics and the like," said Roseann Coscolluela- Villegas, corporate PR manager of Robinsons Land Corporation.

"We believe that these schools have very good business programs in place and our project Robinsons Malls' Entrep Corner is definitely a privilege that we would like to extend to their students."

The first Robinsons Malls Entrep Corner in November 2005 had 11 student companies from Miriam College. The next year, February and November 2006, saw 50 student companies from San Beda College. At present, some 15 student companies from Miriam College's BS Entrepreneurship program are exhibiting

Some of 2bU!'s favorites were the following:

1) **Strip It.** An incredibly inventive product, it is a hair-removal wax made from honey and sugar, laced with moisturizer. Unlike most waxes, you don't have to heat it; just spread it on the direction of the hair growth, pull toward the opposite direction—and hair comes off from the roots! It's definitely a steal for only P280. The booth has a backroom where the hair-removing service is performed.

2) **Mochilla.** Spanish for bags, the brand boasts of cute canvas and metallic patent bags at prices ranging from P250-P899. "We get ideas from magazines and follow trends," said designer Clarissa Lubin. "But our focus is more on convertible bags which are both trendy and functional."

The beige canvas bag which transforms from a body bag to a knapsack goes for P350 and the metallic patent bag which can be worn vertically or horizontally with the rearrangement of the straps goes for P399.

3) **Jem.** Denim fans will love how the bags and clutches are made from twilled fabric. "We believe that denim lasts long and will always be a trend," said Charmaine Princess Go. Clutches range from P100-P200, and bags from P220-P320.

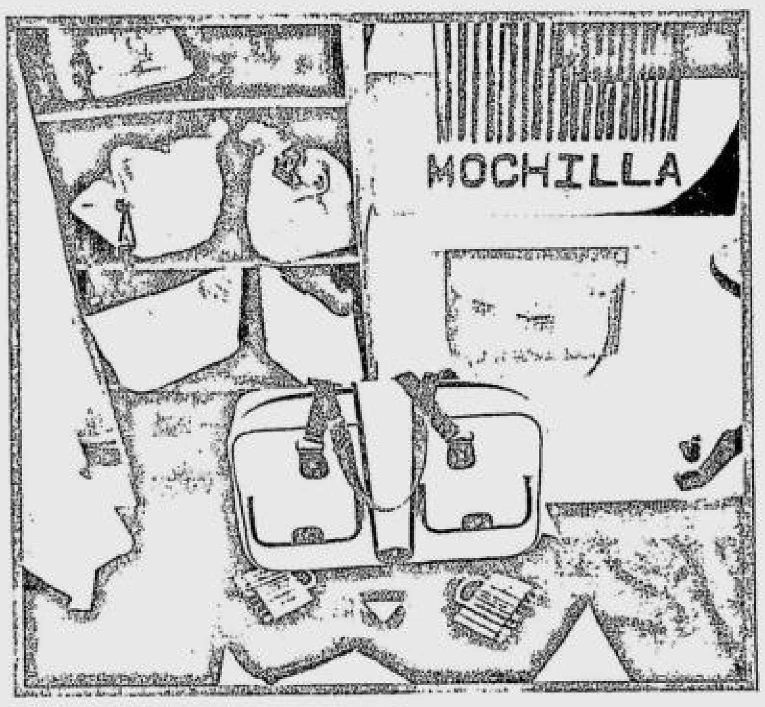
4) **Three Winks.** Bea Bernardo and Alexandra Poon have been organizing school proms and graduation balls for quite sometime now so they decided to turn their organizing skills into their business. They are currently planning the graduation ball of Jubilee Christian School. Initial consultation is free. Succeeding consultation sessions start at P300 per hour.

5) **Rice Ball.** It sells corned beef, *sisig* and *tocino* rice balls with a tasty garlic-mayo dip for P27 per three balls. "We know that rice meals are really popular in the Philippines and we decided to turn them into bite-sized proportions for people on-the-go," said Rachelle Silva. Indeed, this inventive dish is extremely delicious and makes for a great snack.

6) **Minitaw.** "When you think of Filipino desserts, you always think of the *bibingka* and *puto bumbong*," said Maika Cruz. "Based on a survey we did in our school, people were not so familiar with the *palitaw*, but they were curious and wanted to try it. So to be able to introduce it to them, we decided to put new toppings on them."

Sure enough, Minitaw brings back the

YOUNG/ C2



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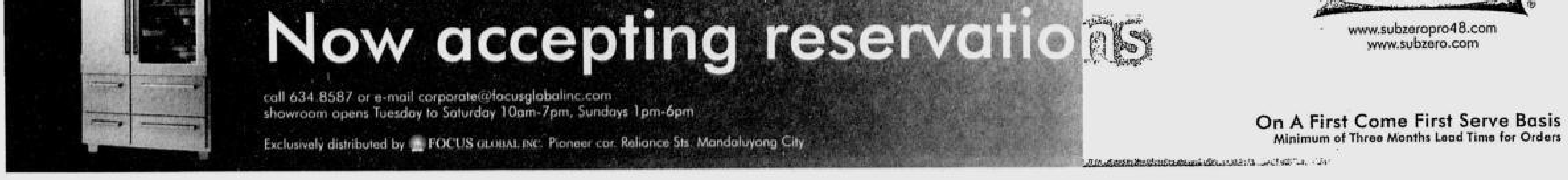

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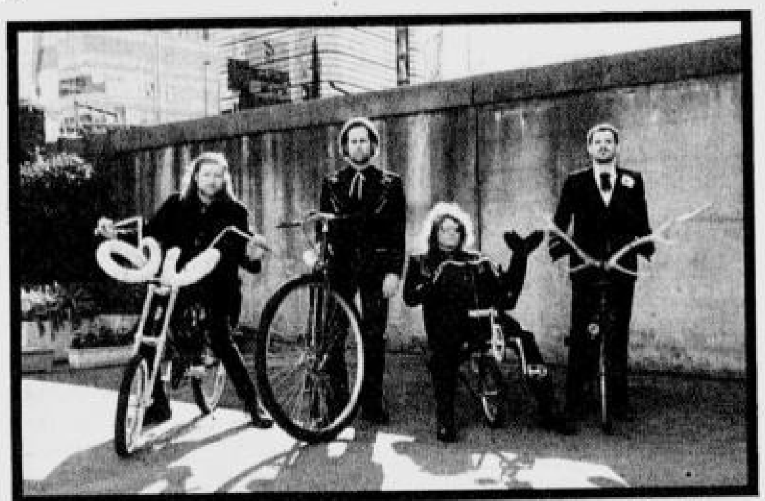
THE author with a towering Mark Stoermer, Grand Hyatt, Melbourne

Interview with The Killers' Mark Stoermer

By Jade Maravillas
2bU! Contributor

MY LOVE AFFAIR with "The Killers" started back in early 2004 when the band was starting to make heads turn in the United Kingdom. During one of our frequent CD swapping sessions, a friend slipped me a downloaded copy of two early cuts, "Smile Like You Mean It" and "Somebody Told Me," from the debut album, "Hot Fuss." The combination of synthesizers straight out of a '60s outer space B-movie, dance rock beats (that soon defined most of music that came out that year) and some of the cheekiest lyrics in a pop song since, well, the decade of decadence made me hit the repeat button for the next two hours.

As soon as the powers that be decided that Pinoys were ready for "Hot Fuss," I literally rushed to the nearest record store and parted with my hard-earned cash. For months, my player blasted ditties about Jenny, Andy, Natalie and Mr. Brightside. Pretty soon radio followed, then global domination: When U2, Coldplay and Robbie Williams cover your single ("All These Things That I've Done") and Cameron Diaz shakes her behind to "Brightside" on the big screen, you know you have it made.



STOERMER, Vannucci, Keuning and Flowers do a different kind of Lance Armstrong at the "Read My Mind" video shoot in Tokyo. MCA MUSIC

To date, "Hot Fuss" has sold over five million copies around the world and was included in Roger Dimery's book, "1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die."

Las Vegas roots

Dubbed by some journalists as "the best British band from America," the pompous foursome (made up of the enigmatic lead vocalist Brandon Flowers, Dave Keuning on guitar, Mark Stoermer on bass and vocals, and Ronnie Vannucci Jr. on drums and percussion) hails from Las Vegas. Everyone was surprised about the band's roots, but it made sense.

If there was any part of America that the androgynous Mr. Flowers, who kept us guessing with the Bowie eyeliner and screaming pink suits, could come from, it would just have to be Sin City. And it was the band's hometown that served as inspiration for its heavily anticipated sophomore effort, "Sam's Town." This time, though, the band tones down the bling and pays homage to the grit of Nevada's desert land.

Although "Sam's Town" still has a smattering of the band's signature synthesizers, the album's apparent departure from "Hot Fuss" New Wave debauchery shocked critics and fans alike. The influential music gurus at Rolling Stone asked, "Why, Killers? Why?" They slapped the album a measly two-star rating.

Teenage girls were appalled that the former metrosexual kings ditched their flashy duds in favor of spaghetti Westerns and, heaven forbid, facial hair! And what's with every other Internet article alluding "Sam's Town" to Bruce Springsteen?

Last January, The Killers headlined Australia's annual Big Day Out music festival and it was during an exclusive one-on-one session with Mark Stoermer at Melbourne's Grand Hyatt that the big Boss question was brought up.

"I think that was really blown out of proportion because Brandon did a couple of interviews while we were writing the songs and people were asking him what he was listening to and he said he was inspired by Springsteen," Stoermer said.

Labeled by fans as the "quiet giant," the 6'5" Stoermer was quick to add, "We still like all the other bands we liked before and as individuals we have our own influences … I mean we respect Bruce Springsteen as an artist but he's just one of hundreds [that influenced our music now.]"

MCA MUSIC

THE KILLERS, on location during the "Read My Mind" video shoot; Dave Keuning, Brandon Flowers, Ronnie Vannucci and Mark Stoermer

I gave the album a spin for the 10th time, and I started to see where Stoermer was getting at. If at all, "Sam's Town" has taken its cues from U2's "The Joshua Tree," combining rootsy Americana with chorus-laden arena anthems. It's no surprise that the album's legendary producers, Alan Moulder and Mark "Flood" Ellis, were individually responsible for some of U2's most memorable work, including the aforementioned album.

Working with two of the industry's elite, according to Stoermer, was like having "professors of our own. We would play the songs and they would kind of sit there and say 'I think this is good because of this' and 'maybe this one needs work.' They didn't necessarily dictate ideas, they tried to draw ideas out of you. And I think it worked out really well, because we really don't want anyone else to get in our creative circle before."

Platinum

Despite initial mixed reviews, "Sam's Town" has gone on to dispute the curse of the sophomore slump. It debuted at No. 2 on Billboard, and at No. 1 on the UK and Canadian charts. It looks like The Killers are making their detractors cringe. In its four months in the market, the album has become platinum, selling more than 2.5 million copies worldwide.

"When You Were Young" topped the US Modern Rock charts and is a unanimous perfect single to set the tone for the album, showcasing Keuning's crafty guitar work and the heavier beats from Vannucci that make Flowers' warble seem, well, endearing. The follow-up "Bones" is a frenzied cacophony of organs, horns and synths interspersed with a multi-track chorus. Albeit not as successful as its predecessor, its music video is in itself a masterpiece, directed by cult favorite Tim Burton ("Edward Scissorhands," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory").

Perhaps the gem to be unearthed from "Sam's Town" is the latest release, "Read My Mind." According to Flowers in a recent radio interview, this is "the best song they have ever written" and even Rolling Stone would have to agree, honoring it No. 12 on its list of The 100 Best Songs of 2006.

There is only one word to aptly describe it—fun. During the band's impressive sold-out concert at Festival Hall in Melbourne, "Read My Mind" got the 7,500-member audience dance like there was no tomorrow and singing "I don't mind if you don't mind/ 'coz I don't shine if you don't shine" in pristine unison, which is commendable for a song that hasn't even been out at radio as of press time.

Directed by the renowned Diane Martel, "Read My Mind" was shot in Tokyo during the band's Japan tour in early January. Why Japan? 'Japan is always interesting," said Stoermer. "We love it so much there, probably 'coz it's the most different from where we come from." The video is quintessentially quirky Japanese: from arcades, Shibuya crossing and a green Gachapin mascot to geishas, capsule hotels and a dancing Elvis impersonator. I asked if there was any thought put into the video concept, to which he laughs. "It was just our attempt to make a light-hearted video. I guess [the video] is our concept, or our perception about being in Japan. It wasn't meant to be over-analyzed."

This sort of carefree thinking was applied to "Sam's Town's" birth process as well. "I don't think you could force something if you tried, it wouldn't be very good if you did. People were always asking "What were you thinking going into this record?" We were kind of thinking the same thing when we did "Hot Fuss." We wrote the songs the same manner as before, it's just we're different people now so something came out of us that's different."

Yes, "Sam's Town" is "different," all right. Some people felt disappointed and alienated by the band's obvious divergence from the sound and image that catapulted them into the musical stratosphere in 2004. But give these guys a break. If there are any comparisons to be made between The Killers' two studio releases, it would seem that the lyrics appear to be less contrived and definitely show the members' maturity. Chief songwriter Flowers has moved on from writing about jealousy and questionable sexual affairs to deeper, darker topics that hit close to home. "My List" speaks about his devotion to his wife Tana Munblowsky (much to the dismay of girls everywhere). On my personal favorite "Bling (Confessions of a King)," Flowers confirms in another interview that the song was written about his alcoholic father. The eponymous title track impeccably introduces us to the running theme throughout the album of superseding their former destinies of being bellhops and pedicab drivers in "a two-star town" ("Read My Mind," "Sam's Town," "For Reasons Unknown").

Like it or not, The Killers have grown up, facial hair and all, and have earned the right to sing about Uncle Sam and success while wearing their best cowboy duds. After all, they are one of the best American bands that came from America.

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Young entrepreneurial . . .

From page C1

palitaw in easy-to-eat sizes (thus, the moniker) which can be served plain or topped with Chocnut, Latik or Leche. "We made them bite-size so they're easier to eat because it's difficult to slice from the larger, original size," Gee Quimbo said.

7) **Le Rouge Tea.** It is a refreshing tea drink made out of rose petal extracts. "We found out that rose is edible so we decided to make tea out of it," Anthonette Amorte said. "It has a lot of benefits, too."

Health benefits of the tea include Vitamins C, K, the B group and Carotene. It also contains calcium, which is vital in the growth of bones and teeth. It also fights colds, pharyngitis, bronchitis and other diseases. And it is sold for the very affordable price of P30 for 500 ml, and has a shelf life of three months at room temperature, and six months in the refrigerator.

8) **Sundae Morning Ice Cream Bar.** Homemade gourmet ice cream is always a treat, especially with unconventional flavors such as Sassy Margarita, a brilliant blend of tequila and lime; Kooky Dough, frozen chocolate cookie dough with classic vanilla ice cream; and Granny Smith's Kitchen, which has caramel, apples and cinnamon. Beat the heat with these delicious flavors that go for P30 per scoop and P55 per two 2 scoops.

The Robinsons Malls' Entrep Corner exhibit is at the East Wing, 1/L, Robinsons Galleria. It runs until March 22.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

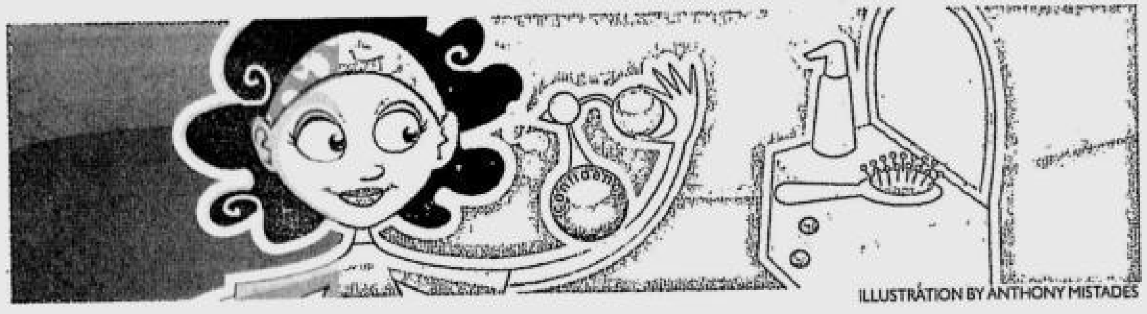

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

self-esteem

From boyish to beautiful

By Cheryl Polican

MY BROTHER IS PRETTIER than I am. And he is so without even trying. No, he's not gay or anything of that sort, he was just born with the pretty features that I was supposed to have.

Tell me, aren't dainty hands and feet with shapely fingers and toes a woman's features? What about a sharp nose and thin kissable lips? So why am I stuck with this body that makes me think there must have been some mistake and I was made a girl only on the last minute?

Over the years, this great switcheroo has earned my brother his boy-next-door looks, a la John Prats—small, petite, *artistahin* (actor-like).

I, on the other hand, became an awkward toss between a boy and a girl. I've got a girl's body with a hodgepodge of boyish features. Take one look at my hands and you'll know what I mean. I've got big, unshapely hands that even the best manicure could not help, with matching feet that are a big pudgy pair, reminding me of a giant's feet in fairytale illustrations.

I once took a picture of them, wishing they would look different in photo than in the original. I was disappointed because they looked worse up close. I never took the photo out again.

Added to my list is my very wonderful voice (ahem!) I've already lost count of the number of times I've been mistaken as a man whenever I answered the phone. And when I'd give my sibling the phone to answer, I'd always hear him say "*Hindi yun tatay ko*, sister *ko yun* (That wasn't my dad, it was my sister)."

Oh my! Do I sound that bad? Anyway, my list is still quite long but I'd stop there, for both our sakes.

I didn't need anyone telling me about my faults, I was not blind to them, but people did so anyway. "*Alam mo, mas maganda pa ang kuya mo sa iyo* (you know, your brother looks prettier than you)," they'd say. I was always just my brother's shadow. He gets the praises and I get the ho-hums. He's the looker and I'm still the ho-hum.

And that was how my confidence got thrown out the door. I became the timid, awkward girl who shied away from social events and functions. I hated attending our family reunions because I never felt pretty enough to be among my beauty-queen cousins. In a group of girls, I always felt that I stood out like a sore thumb as my insecurities were underscored by what I saw in them that I didn't have.

I would never believe anyone who told me that I was pretty. I would simply scoff at the idea and tell them to stop being a *bolero* (kidder). I even thought it incredulous that someone would be attracted to me, since there were so many prettier girls out there. I was just that—the ugly duckling who would rather hide at home, missing out on a lot of fun and good opportunities.

It wasn't a case of overnight magic that made me gain back a little of my confidence. Even now, I am still working on it. It was a whole lot of building up by my dear friends, and by no less than my brother himself, which did the trick. They coaxed me out of my shell and into the world.

"You know what, you're actually pretty," they said. After hearing it a couple of times, I looked at myself hard in the mirror. What is it that they saw that I wasn't able to? Why do I see a plain old-looking boyish girl when they saw potential written all over my features?

I then decided to prove them right. If they saw a budding person in me, I should try to see it the same way. I went ahead and gave myself a makeover. I tried to accentuate my girlish features to offset the odd ones.

My hair is longer now. I junked the eyeglasses for a pair of contact lenses. I now wear slip-ons even if they show my unsightly feet and toes. I still don't have the nerve for a lot of other things, but I'm working on it.

Along with these physical changes is the change in mindset that reminds me not to complain about what I see as faults. I am fortunate enough to have this body, and I'm sure God had intended it just the way it is. I am now trying to live outside my hermitage, and I am enjoying every minute of it!

Be a part of 2bU! and Dove's Self-Esteem Chronicles

DOVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE SELF-Esteem Fund, which will be used to run BodyTalk Workshops for young girls. In this connection, 2bU! wants to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. How did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence, your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building a positive self-image?

2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-Esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need: "I'm petite and a big dreamer" (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet" (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful" (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.

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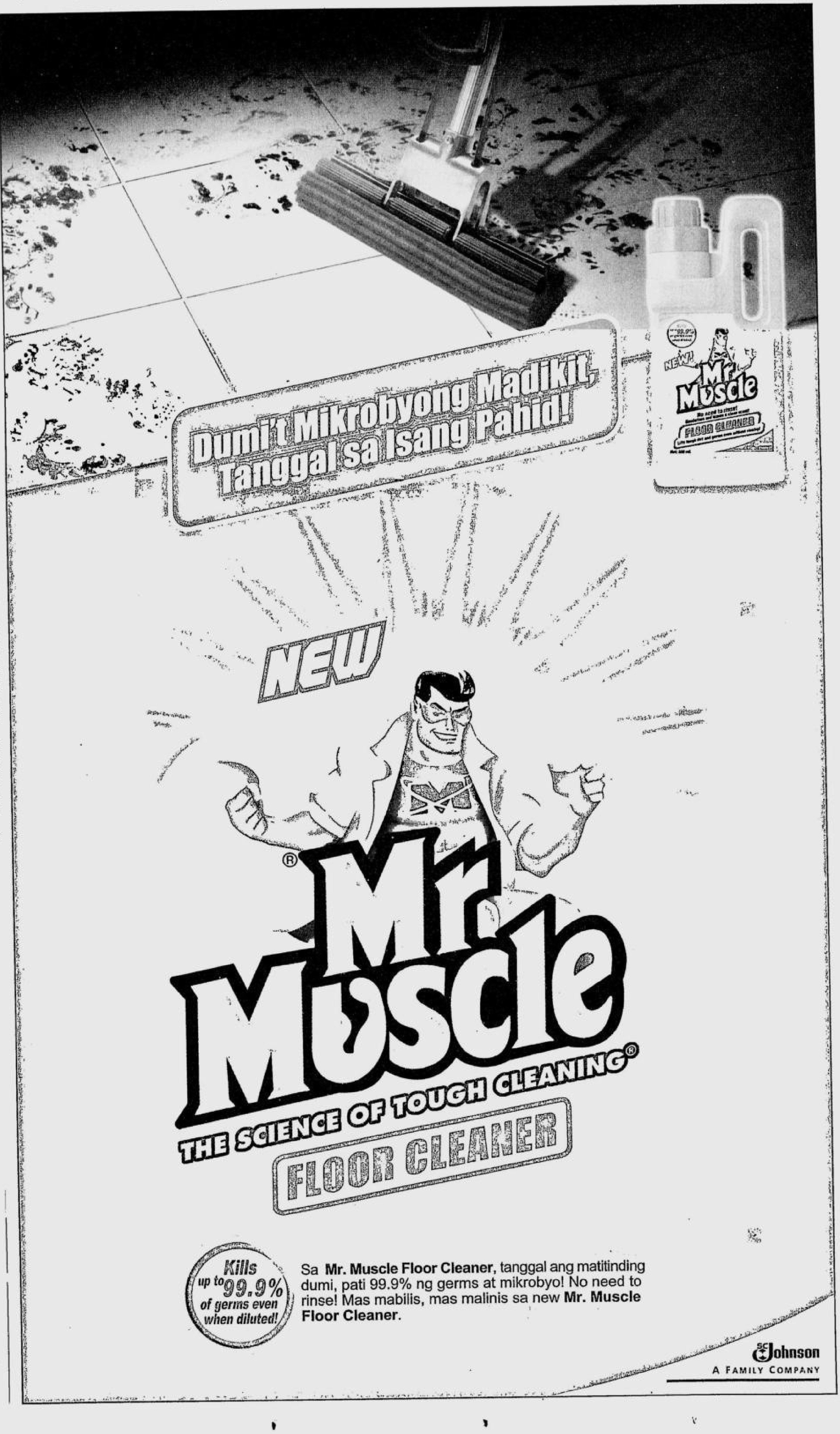

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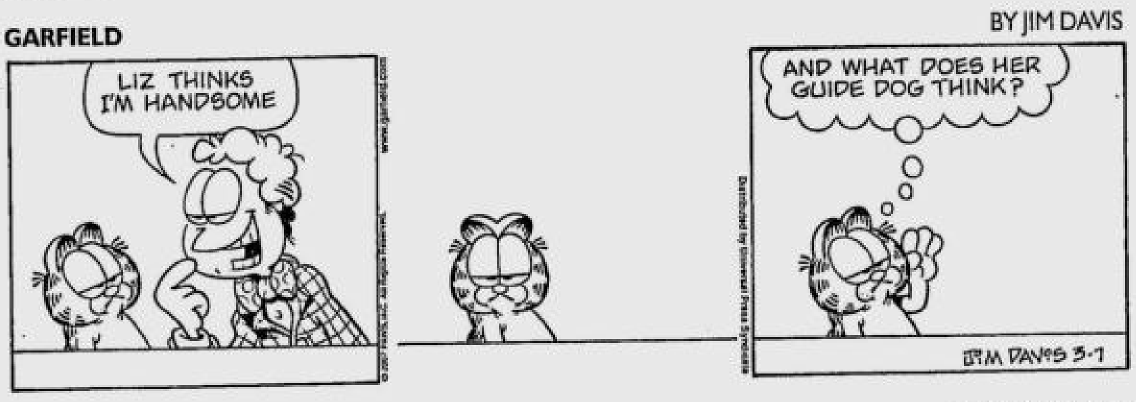
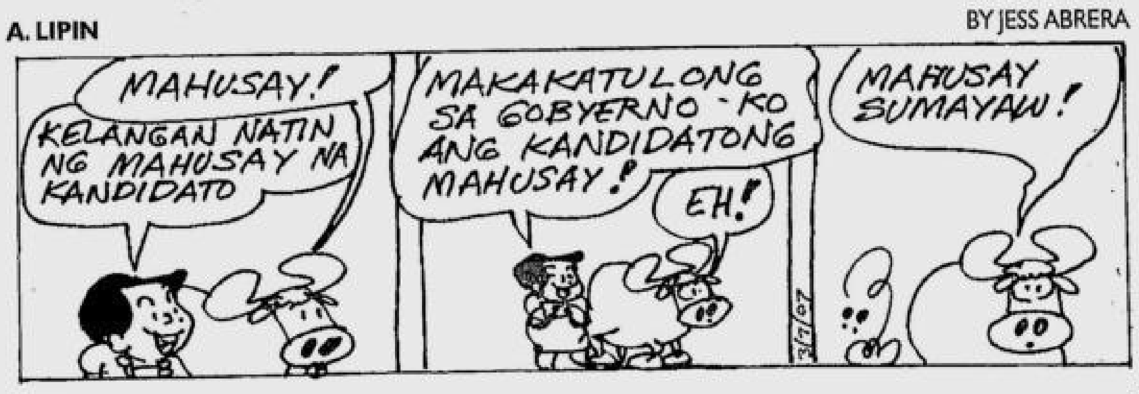
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


LIZ THINKS I'M HANDSOME
AND WHAT DOES HER GUIDE DOG THINK?
JIM DAVIS 3-7

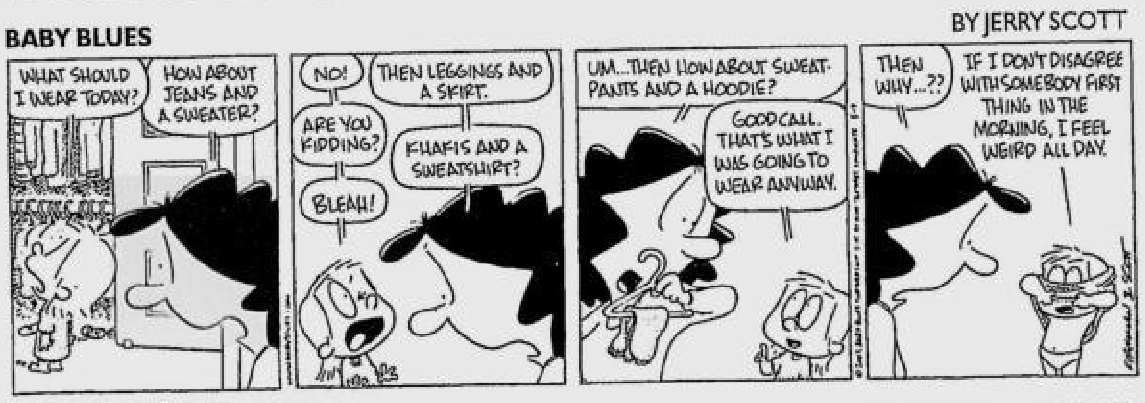
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGAN NATIN NG MAHUSAY NA KANDIDATO
MAHUSAY!
MAKAKATULONG SA GOBYERNO - KO ANG KANDIDATONG MAHUSAY!
EH!
MAHUSAY SUMAYAW!
3/7/07

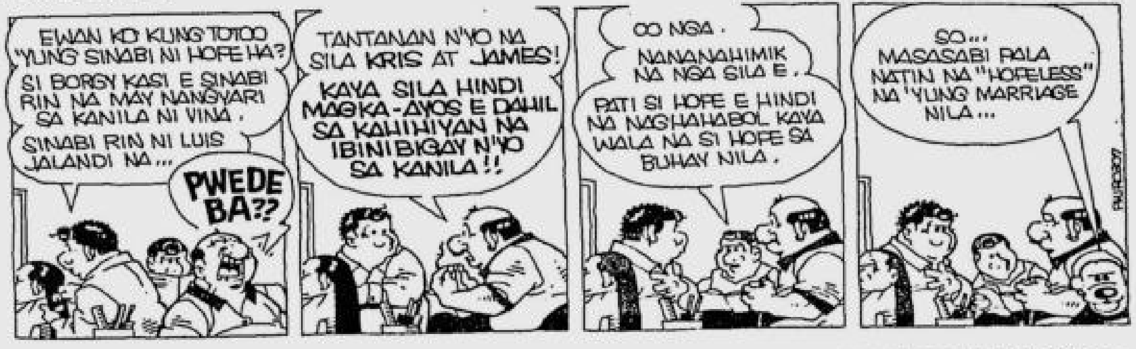
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT SHOULD I WEAR TODAY?
HOW ABOUT JEANS AND A SWEATER?
NO!
ARE YOU KIDDING?
BLEAH!
THEN LEGGINGS AND A SKIRT.
KHAKIS AND A SWEATSHIRT?
UM...THEN HOW ABOUT SWEATPANTS AND A HOODIE?
GOOD CALL. THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO WEAR ANYWAY.
THEN WHY...??
IF I DON'T DISAGREE WITH SOMEBODY FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, I FEEL WEIRD ALL DAY.

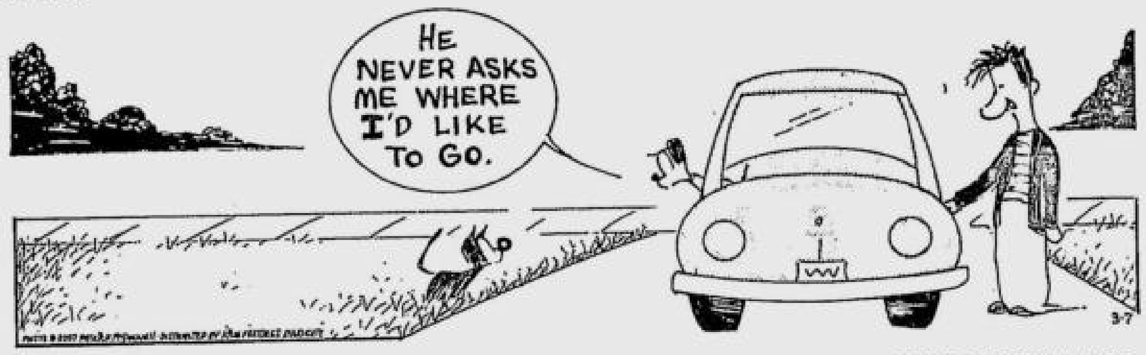
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


EWAN KO KUNG TOTOO 'YUNG SINABI NI HOPE HA?
SI BORGY KASI E SINABI RIN NA MAY NANGYARI SA KANILA NI VINA.
SINABI RIN NI LUIS JALANDI NA...
PWEDE BA??
TANTANAN N'YO NA SILA KRIS AT JAMES!
KAYA SILA HINDI MAGKA-AYOS E DAHIL SA KAHIHIYAN NA IBINIBIGAY N'YO SA KANILA!!
OO NGA.
NANANAHIMIK NA NGA SILA E.
PATI SI HOPE E HINDI NA NAGHAHABOL KAYA WALA NA SI HOPE SA BUHAY NILA.
SO... MASASABI PALA NATIN NA "HOPELESS" NA 'YUNG MARRIAGE NILA...

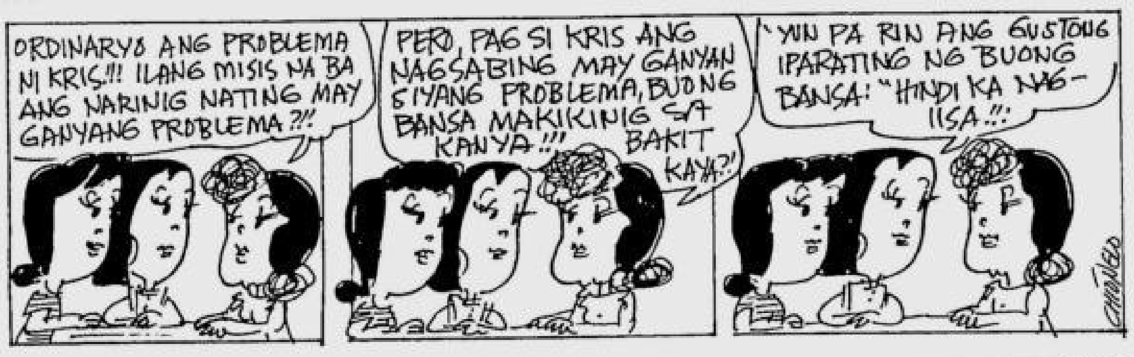
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HE NEVER ASKS ME WHERE I'D LIKE TO GO.
3-7

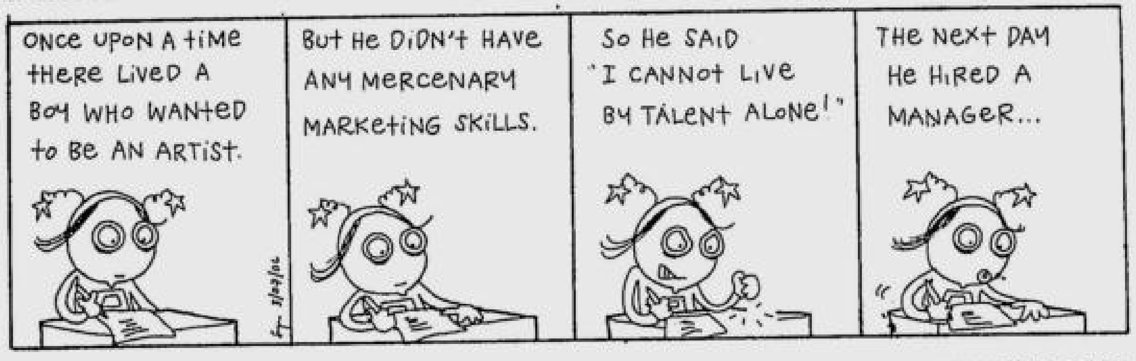
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ORDINARYO ANG PROBLEMA NI KRIS!!! ILANG MISIS NA BA ANG NARINIG NATING MAY GANYANG PROBLEMA?!!
PERO, PAG SI KRIS ANG NAGSABING MAY GANYAN SIYANG PROBLEMA, BUONG BANSA MAKIKINIG SA KANYA!!!
BAKIT KAYA?!
'YUN PA RIN ANG GUSTONG IPARATING NG BUONG BANSA: "HINDI KA NAG-IISA!!!
CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

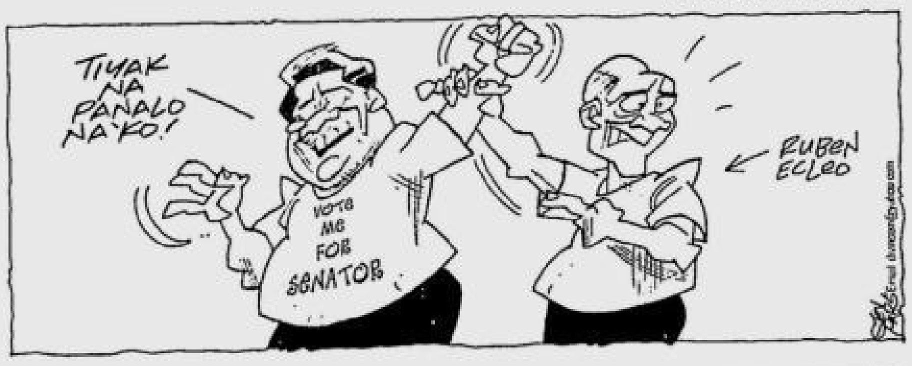
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ONCE UPON A TIME THERE LIVED A BOY WHO WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST.
BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MERCENARY MARKETING SKILLS.
SO HE SAID "I CANNOT LIVE BY TALENT ALONE!"
THE NEXT DAY HE HIRED A MANAGER...

DIVINE COMEDY

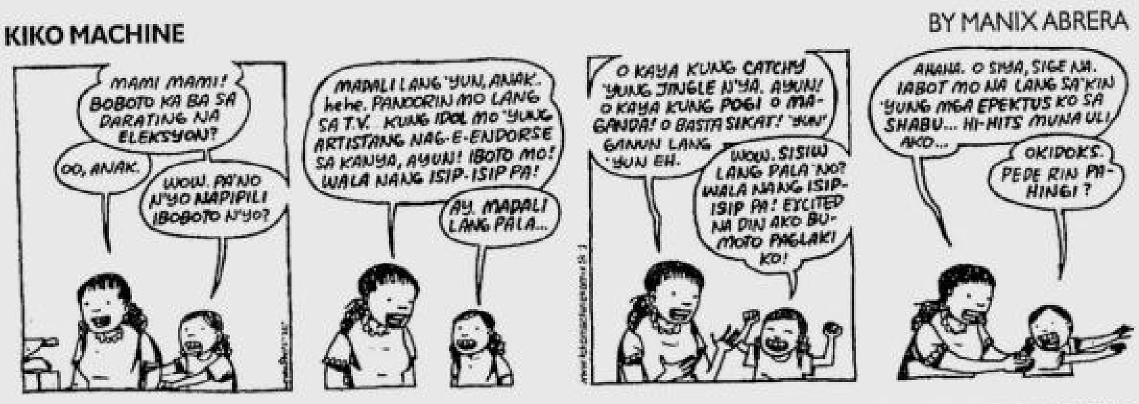
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY NAGPAPA-ENDORSE SA ISANG RELIGIOUS LEADER


TIYAK NA PANALO NA'KO!
VOTE ME FOR SENATOR
RUBEN ECLEO

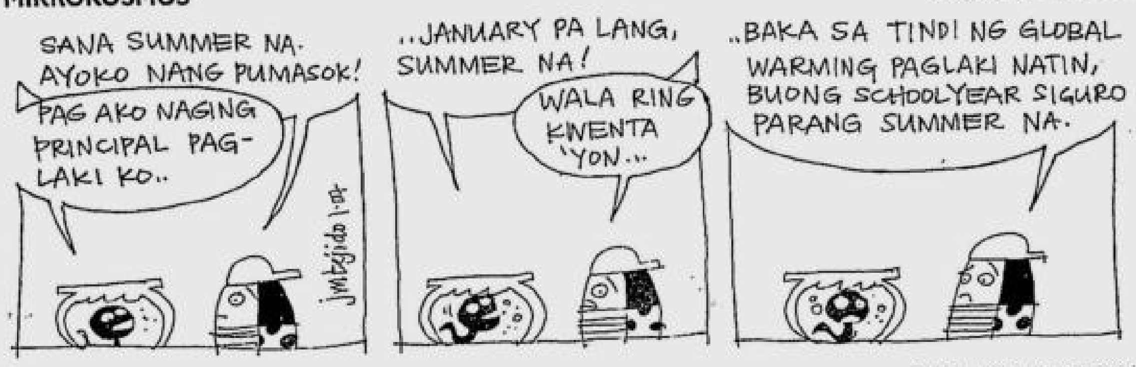
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


MAMI MAMI! BOBOTO KA BA SA DARATING NA ELEKSYON?
OO, ANAK.
WOW. PA'NO N'YO NAPIPILI IBOBOTO N'YO?
MADALI LANG 'YUN, ANAK. HEHE. PANOORIN MO LANG SA T.V. KUNG IDOL MO 'YUNG ARTISTANG NAG-E-ENDORSE SA KANYA, AYUN! IBOTO MO! WALA NANG ISIP-ISIP PA!
AY, MADALI LANG PALA...
O KAYA KUNG CATCHY 'YUNG JINGLE N'YA. AYUN! O KAYA KUNG POGI O MAGANDA! O BASTA SIKAT! 'YUN! GANUN LANG 'YUN EH.
WOW. SISIW LANG PALA 'NO? WALA NANG ISIP-ISIP PA! EXCITED NA DIN AKO BUMOTO PAGLAKI KO!
AHAHA. O SIYA, SIGE NA. IABOT MO NA LANG SA'KIN 'YUNG MGA EPEKTUS KO SA SHABU... HI-HITS MUNA ULI AKO...
OKIDOKS. PEDE RIN PA-HINGI?

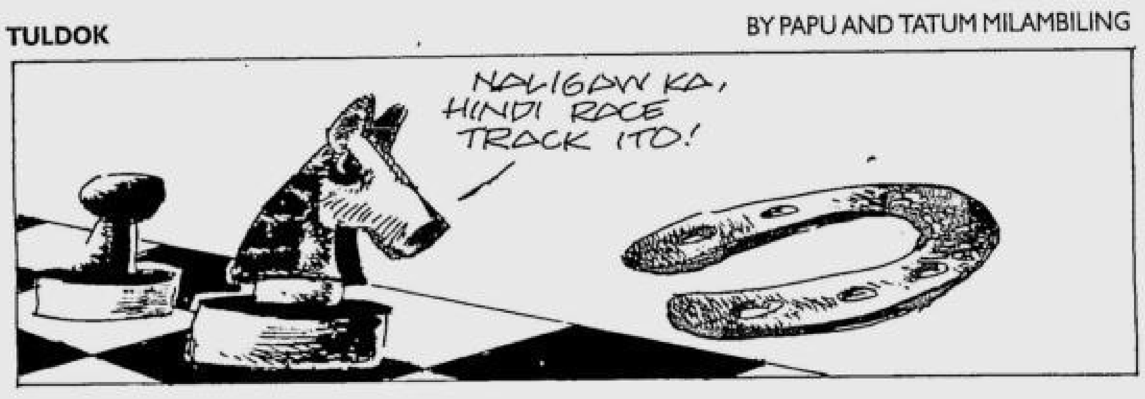
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SANA SUMMER NA. AYOKO NANG PUMASOK!
PAG AKO NAGING PRINCIPAL PAGLAKI KO..
jmtejido 1.07
..JANUARY PA LANG, SUMMER NA!
WALA RING KWENTA 'YON..
..BAKA SA TINDI NG GLOBAL WARMING PAGLAKI NATIN, BUONG SCHOOLYEAR SIGURO PARANG SUMMER NA.

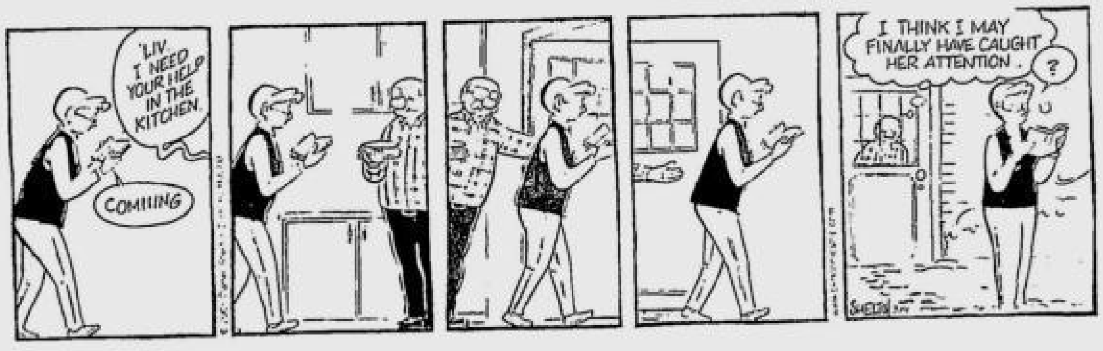
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

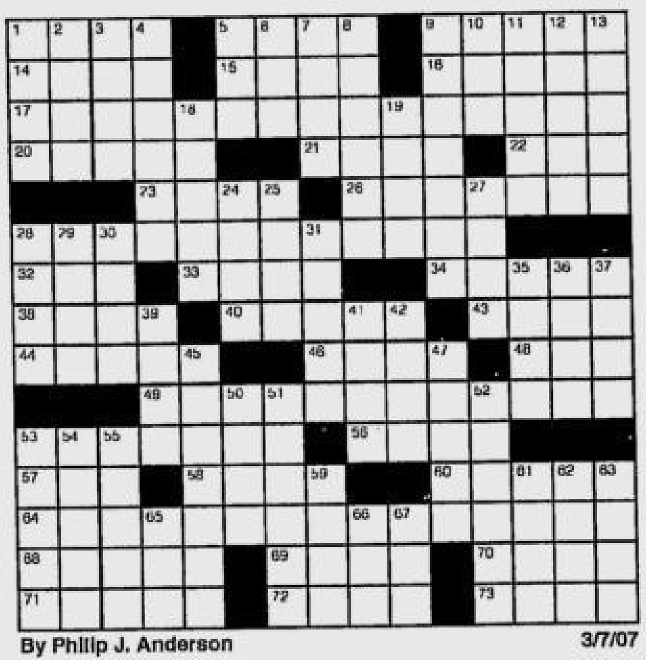

NALIGAW KA, HINDI RACE TRACK ITO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


'LIV, I NEED YOUR HELP IN THE KITCHEN
COMING
I THINK I MAY FINALLY HAVE CAUGHT HER ATTENTION.
?
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

3/7/07

ACROSS

1 News source?
5 In one's right mind
9 Play groups
14 Pisa's river
15 Mimic
16 Milo or Tessie
17 Advice from Wynton Marsalis?
20 Old Pac. pact
21 Psych final?
22 Mich. neighbor
23 Cry of pain
26 Couch potato quality
28 Advice from Georg Solti?
32 Neurological test letters
33 In this place
34 Don Carlos in "Don Carlos"
38 River of Flanders
40 Jaffe and Barrett
43 Ritzy wheels
44 Beer mug
46 Top pair
48 Explosive initials
49 Advice from Andre Previn?
53 Bullfighters
56 First garden
57 Park in NYC?
58 Comic Rudner
60 Simpson or Astaire
64 Advice from Ravi Shankar?
68 "The Waste Land" poet
69 Port city of Pennsylvania
70 Tours summers
71 Siena seven
72 Pianist Hess
73 No great shakes

DOWN

1 Sci. classes
2 __ Stanley Gardner
3 Celebes ox
4 Bootlick
5 __ Paulo, Brazil
6 Kwik-E-Mart clerk on "The Simpsons"
7 Ustinov in "Quo Vadis"
8 Amatory
9 Musical performance
10 Cigar residue
11 Okay, speak!
12 City near Roma
13 __ Cruz, CA
18 Green years
19 Sot
24 "Silkwood" star
25 Medal recipient
27 Stagger
28 Florida chain
29 Aviary home
30 Curved molding
31 French assembly
35 Young lice
36 Potent starter?
37 Campus mil. grp.
39 Abundant
41 Soreness
42 Kernel
45 Tell the story
47 Spread lies
50 French do
51 Value
52 Panties and teddies
53 Finish lines
54 Immature seed
55 Kindled anew
59 Out of kilter
61 Within: pref.
62 T-shirt sizes
63 Exxon, once
65 Grouped merchandise
66 Title for a knight
67 Oolong or pekoe

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	C	L	E	F	■	T	H	O	R	■	E	L	M	S
E	R	A	T	O	■	O	O	N	A	■	X	I	I	I
L	O	W	E	R	■	R	O	T	C	■	P	E	E	L
T	A	J	■	B	A	N	K	A	C	C	O	U	N	T
S	T	O	W	E	D	■	■	P	O	O	R	■	■	■
■	■	U	N	S	A	F	E	■	O	U	T	L	E	T
H	E	R	B	■	H	A	Z	I	N	G	■	I	V	E
U	L	N	A	S	■	W	I	T	■	H	A	N	E	S
N	I	A	■	T	A	N	N	E	D	■	V	C	R	S
G	A	L	W	A	Y	■	E	M	I	L	I	O	■	■
■	■	■	A	I	N	T	■	■	O	O	D	L	E	S
W	O	R	L	D	R	E	C	O	R	D	■	N	R	A
E	T	A	L	■	A	N	O	N	■	G	U	L	A	G
B	O	Z	O	■	N	O	L	L	■	E	R	O	S	E
S	E	E	P	■	D	R	A	Y	■	S	E	G	E	R

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3/7/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're complex. You have a fine mind that grasps abstract ideas. You want to give form to concepts. Personally, you are caring, giving and generous. You're also secretive and a bit of a dreamer. You're a good friend to those you care about. The year ahead is full of exciting new beginnings. Open any door!

Birthdate of: Ivan Lendl, tennis player; Rachel Weisz, actress; Wanda Sykes, comedian/actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Communication with groups, friends and organizations will begin to improve now. Feel free to move forward with important new ventures.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Things have been stalled in the water lately. Today you have a green light to go forward with anything that affects your career and your reputation among your peers.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): School plans or anything related to travel that might have been delayed recently will now move forward much more easily. Thank goodness! You're back in the saddle again.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Whatever delays have plagued you with inheritances, taxes, debt and the like will now be a thing of the past. (One hopes.) You can move forward in these areas with greater confidence.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Ex-partners and old friends might have played a role in your life recently. (Not easy for some of you.) Now this focus switches to current and even future events.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Delays, goof-ups and confused communication have dogged your steps at work. As of today, these little errors will return to normal.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Everything having to do with children, sports, the entertainment world and vacations has been a bit topsy-turvy lately. Now that Mercury has turned direct, things will be more reliable in these areas.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There have been so many delays on your home front! Now things will move forward much more smoothly. (You can relax on this score.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Perhaps more than others, you have suffered from delays, breakdowns in communication, mixed-up messages, lost papers and transportation nightmares. You'll be glad to know that this horrid planetary influence is over. (Gasp!)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Recently, checks have been late in the mail, and delays and errors with a number of financial transactions have been a problem. This stressful influence ends today. Yay!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Mercury has been retrograde in your sign, causing you all kinds of confusion and delays. Not a pretty picture. However, as of today, things will tend to return to their normal level of insanity.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Behind-the-scenes issues and dealings with the government can now move forward more efficiently and speedily. Since your career looks so good this year, this is welcome news.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

				7				
			4		3			
		8				7		
	1						9	
9		3	1	6	8	5		4
	7						1	
	8			3	7		2	
	6			1	4		8	
	4	7	8	9	2	3	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/07

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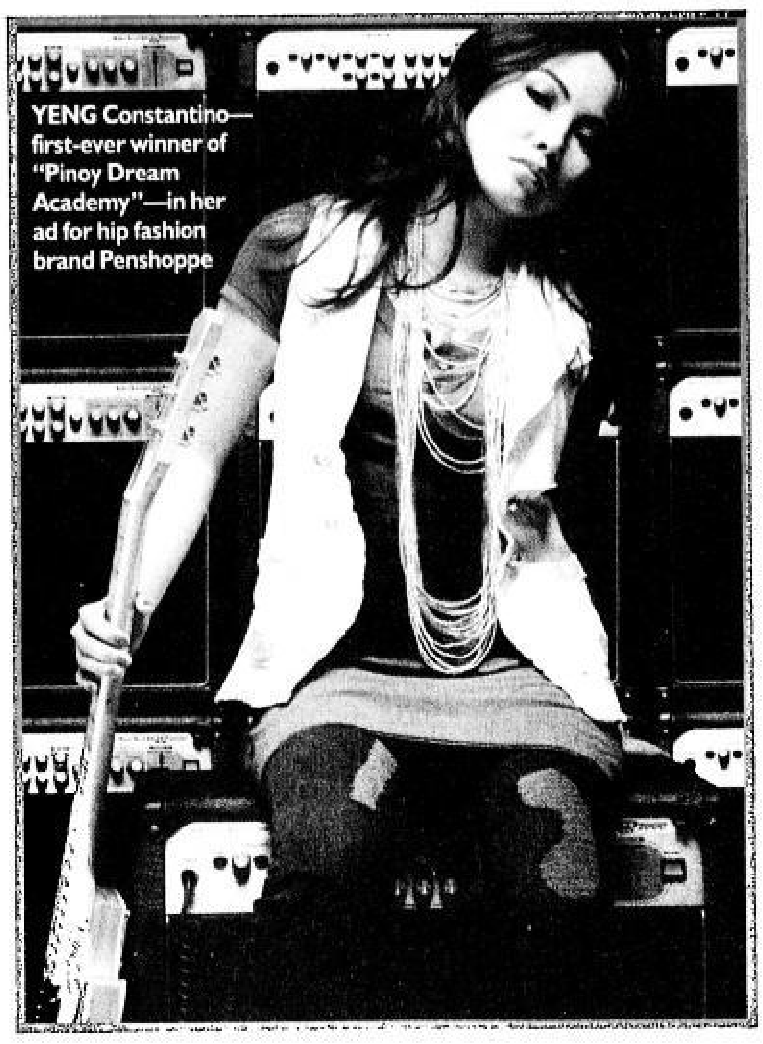
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	8	5	2	6	9	1	3	4
2	3	4	5	8	1	7	9	6
9	1	6	3	7	4	2	8	5
6	7	2	8	9	5	3	4	1
3	9	8	4	1	2	6	5	7
4	5	1	7	3	6	8	2	9
1	4	3	9	2	7	5	6	8
5	2	7	6	4	8	9	1	3
8	6	9	1	5	3	4	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★



YENG Constantino—first-ever winner of "Pinoy Dream Academy"—in her ad for hip fashion brand Penshoppe

'Pinoy Dream Academy' finalists turn dreamy, style-wise

CHAD Peralta and Panky Trinidad are the most *astig* in the bunch, favoring rock songs when performing.

PDA winner Yeng and runner-up Jay-R look and sound good together. At left photo, the Top 6 scholars kick off their world tour with a concert at Cebu Coliseum.

Scholars now have a uniform!

JAY-R Siaboc, a younger version of Jericho Rosales, hails from Cebu and is now making ripples nationwide.

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WEARING A UNIFORM IN SCHOOL may be a burden to some students. Wearing a uniform after school is even worse. But for the Top 6 scholars of "Pinoy Dream Academy," wearing one now that they have graduated from the Academy is definitely cool.

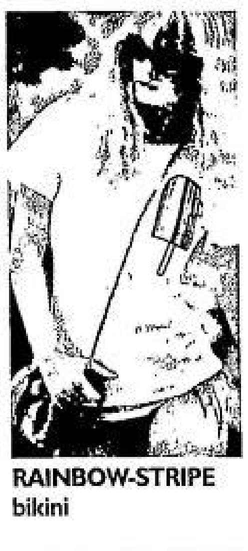
The Top 6 scholars of the show—Yeng Constantino, Jay-R Siaboc, Ronnie Liang, Panky Trinidad, Chad Peralta and Irish Fullerton—are now official endorsers of Penshoppe. The hip fashion brand can spot a winner among the youth when it sees one. And when they saw the dreamers, they didn't hesitate signing them to be their models.

Why the scholars? The scholars are those who have already gone full blast in making their dreams come true. They are those who are making the most out of their time, resources and gifts, those who are driven by excellence and an inner fire to win.

Penshoppe introduced their latest models to the press in Cebu recently. That same night, the teens had a live concert at Cebu Coliseum to kick off their world tour. Garbed in reconstructed Penshoppe clothes made by local designers, the dreamers sure looked good and ready to take on the real world.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

EMPIRE dress



RAINBOW-STRIPE bikini

frolic

DRESSING UP FOR THE FUN OUTDOORS comes easy with Dorothy Perkins' Spring/Summer 2007 Collection.

Smock and baby-doll dresses come in vibrant, citrus shades with super-sized floral prints. Soft cotton smocked dresses are in washed hues. There are also subtle neutrals and blues, plus neon and fluorescent flashes in sportswear. Revive the retro era with key long-line T-shirt dresses and sports parka. The collection's minimal and nostalgic palette highlights red, yellow and blue.

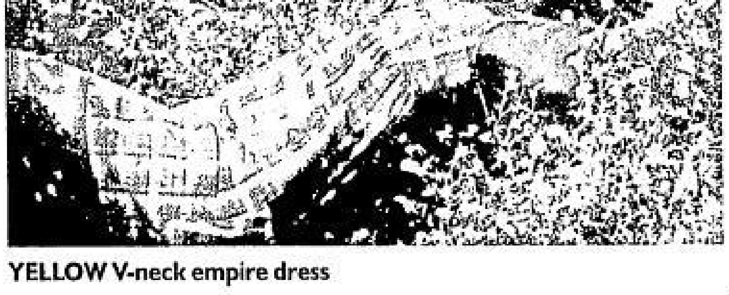
Turn-up shorts and color-block printed vests all make for a dressier, fancier look. This gives a sultry edge to casual day fashion.

Dorothy Perkins also offers sharply tailored high-waisted culottes, lightweight pussy bow cardigans, and bright silky smock tops.

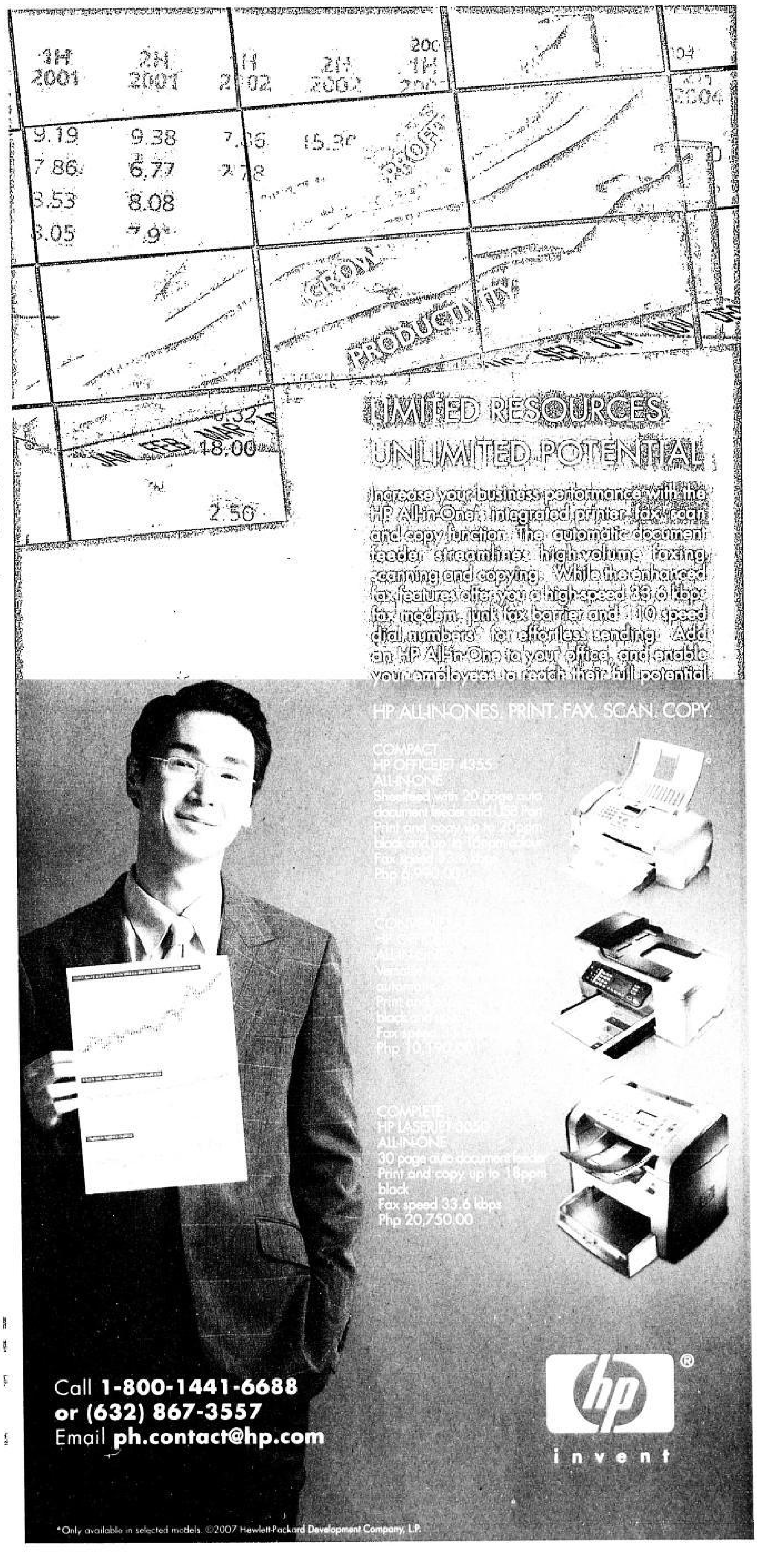
For a voguish approach on poolside and beach fashion, cover up with acid brights and printed sheer kaftans with gold accessories. Metallic pieces positively shine this season and are perfect for printed outfits.

With over 600 stores in the UK and 52 international outlets, Dorothy Perkins brings its hip, new style to Filipina fashionistas. Dorothy Perkins stores are located at Robinsons Galleria, Power Plant Mall, The Podium, Glorietta 3 and SM Mall of Asia.

BLUE babydoll scoop-neck (above); news boy cap, orange across body bag and hot pink leggings



YELLOW V-neck empire dress



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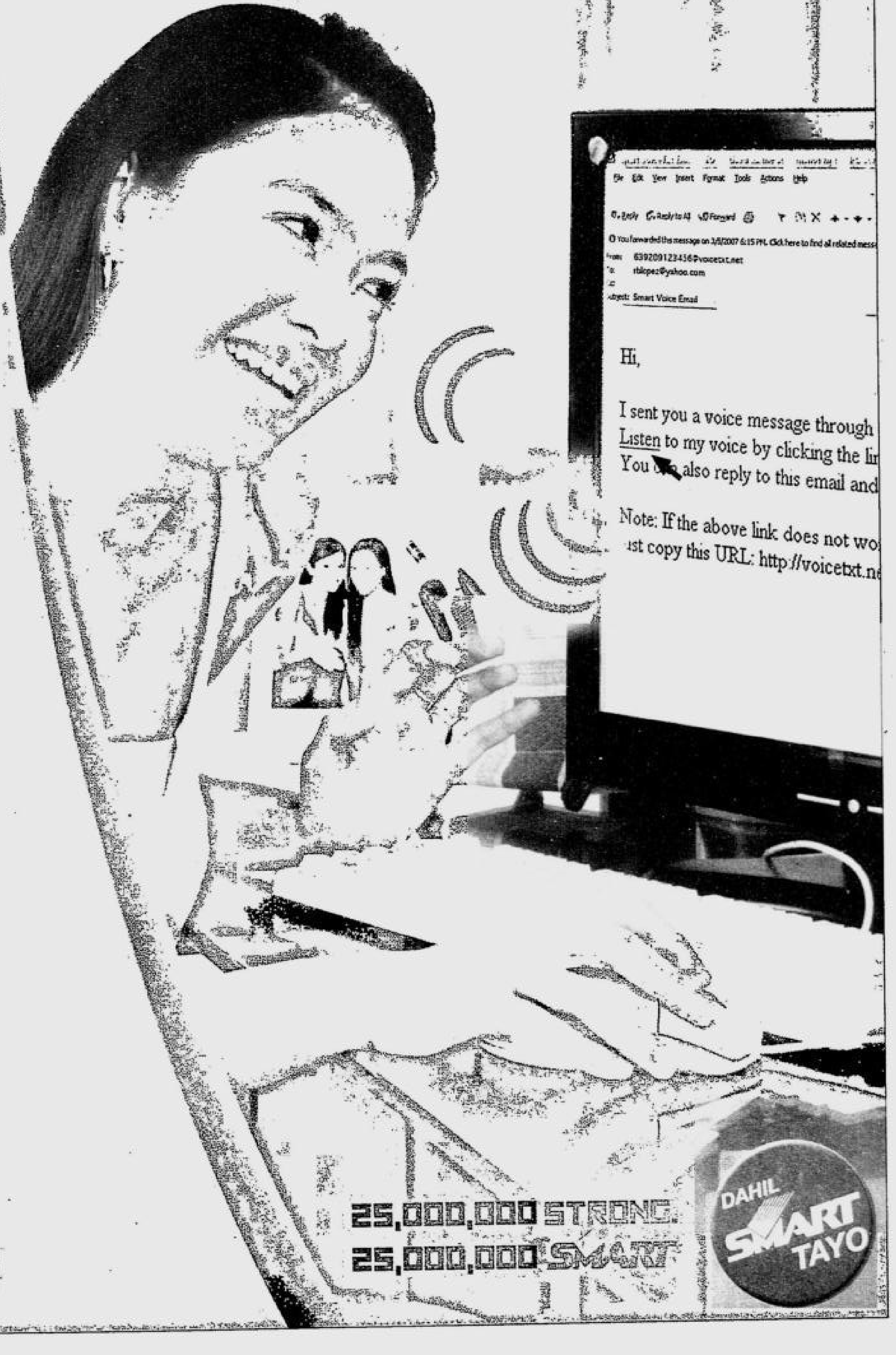
ANOTHER FIRST FROM THE LEADER!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Editor Emmie G. Velarde
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

ABANGAN
ang kukumpleto
sa ating samahan.
11 MARCH 2007
LINGGO

Movie press film awards set

STORY ON PAGE D2

UPLIFTING PERFORMANCE
British jazz pianist and singer Jamie Cullum soars during his performance on Sunday at the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta. REUTERS

No frontal nudity for Polo

POLO RAVALES HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT showing his butt for a scene in Seiko Films' "Silip." He's now sporting a tan for his role in the movie which is kinda like "A Beautiful Mind."

Is frontal nudity next on his agenda? He says, laughing, "No way!"

Yeah! Better to leave something to the imagination. His leading ladies are **Diana Zubiri** and **Francine Prieto.**

Now that he's on a "cool-off period" with **Ara Mina,** wouldn't he be tempted to fall for either Diana or Francine? "My heart is still reserved for Ara. We are working things out. Diana and Francine have their own charms but *siguro*, if ever *lang ha*, I'd go for Diana because Francine is too tall for me *(laughs)*."

Height doesn't matter when our heart makes us try on love for sighs!

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Concert repeat

I immensely enjoyed the V-day show "Love to Laugh" of **Ogie Alcasid** and **AiAi de las Alas.** I couldn't stop laughing till the next day!

Regine Velasquez's parents were in the audience. Ai kept ribbing Ogie about the presence of his "in-laws." It was mayhem when Ai mimicked Regine and addressed Ogie as "Honey."

Don't miss their repeat (before they tour Canada and the US) on March 10, 8 p.m. at the Aliw Theater. (Call 9115555 or 8543322 for tickets.)

Ogie and Ai have effortless rapport. They ought to have a TV show together. But he's a Kapuso and she's a Kapamilya. Who's willing to make the big switch, if ever?

AiAi chuckles. "Uhm... if the price is right *pero* give *ako* discount *basta si* Ogie *kasama ko!*"

But the *joie de vivre* they spread around so well is priceless!

Rocking Manila

Before preggy **Barbie Almabis** rocks the cradle, she'll be in Bayo's "Let's Rock Manila!" with **Kitchie Nadal** on March 9, 8 p.m. at the Big Dome.

For the first time, Barbie and Kitchie will do their rock stunts backed up by a live orchestra. (Call 9115555 for tickets.)

"Barbie and I are so used to jamming with bands. *Di kami nagsasapawan,*" says Kitchie. And when is she going to get hitched like Barbie?

NO FRONTAL/ D4

SECRET CEREMONY
LONDON—Model/actress Elizabeth Hurley married Indian businessman Arun Nayar (the couple is seen here in a file photo) in a secret ceremony on Friday, a day before the couple were due to host a lavish wedding party at the Sudeley Castle in southwest England, British media reported on Saturday. REUTERS

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Tipid sa allowance, pero hindi tipid sa barkadahan! Kaya lahat kami naka-Sun na.

"Siyempre, estudyante, kailangan mag-save. Sa Sun, tipid sa allowance pero 'di tipid sa calls. Pwedeng tumawag nang tumawag. 'Di ako nahuhuli sa gimik ng barkada."

Vivienne Santos
18 years old, student
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PRIMEVAL
THE PROMISE
300
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD
THE HITCHER
300
GHOST RIDER
PRIMEVAL
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
EPIC MOVIE
MUSIC AND LYRICS
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
YOU GOT ME
DEAD PEOPLE 2
SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

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SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

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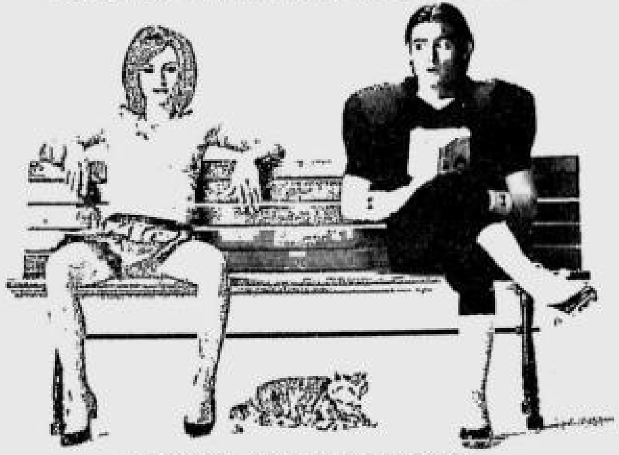
kevin zegers samaire armstrong sharon osbourne

it's a boygirl thing

He's the hottest jock.
She's the biggest nerd.
They're sworn enemies.
And they've just switched bodies.



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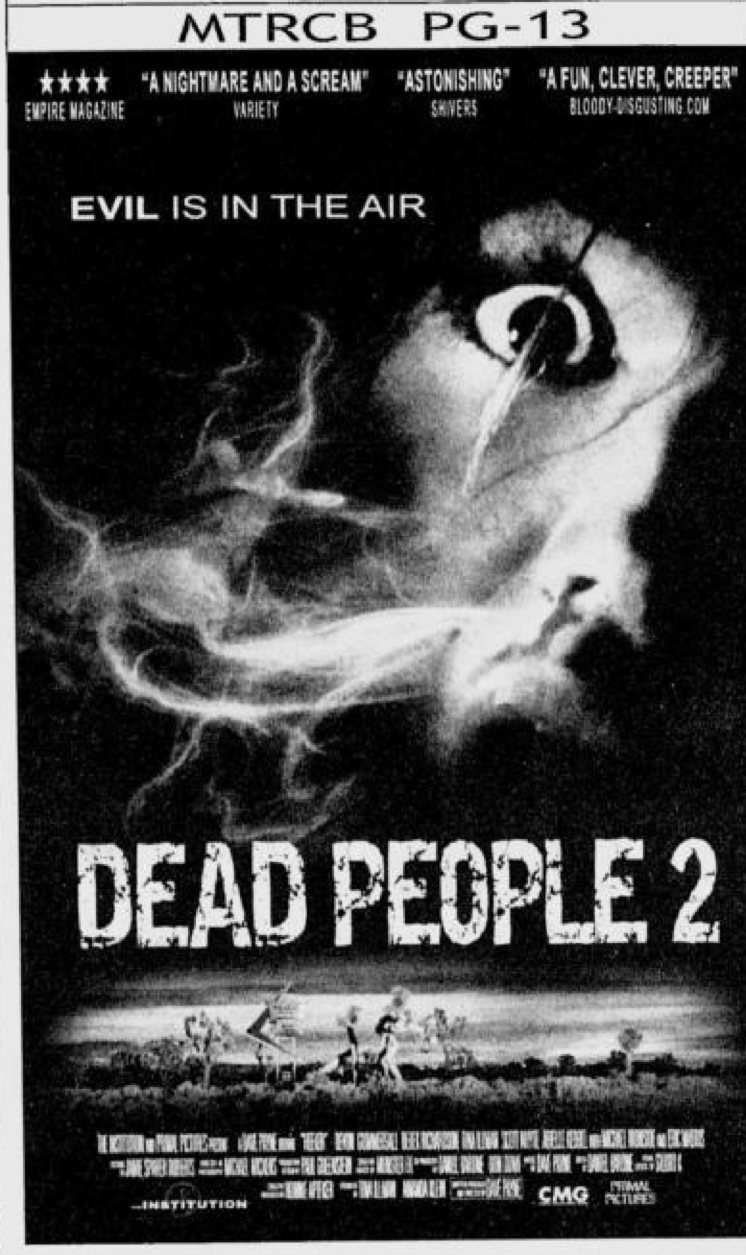

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"KASAL, Kasali, Kasalo"

Movie press film awards set

"PACQUIAO: THE MOVIE," THE WORLD boxing champion Manny Pacquiao biopic starring Jericho Rosales, is in the running for a Movie of the Year trophy, along with "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," "Kaleldo," "Don't Give Up On Us," "Ligalig" and "You Are The One."

The Philippine Movie Press Club will hand out the 23rd Star Awards for Movies at the University Theater in UP Diliman on March 23 at 7 p.m.

Produced by Starview Productions, the awards carries the theme "A Night of Winners, A Night of Champions, A Night of Triumph."

It will be telecast the following day, 10 p.m. on IBC-13.

Nominees in the other major categories are:

Movie Director: Joyce Bernal ("Don't Give Up On Us"/Star Cinema); Cathy Molina-Garcia, "You Are The One"/Star Cinema); Joel Lamangan ("Pacquiao"/ FLT Films International); Brillante Mendoza ("Kaleldo"/Center Stage Productions); Cesar Montano ("Ligalig"/CM Films); Jose Javier Reyes ("Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"/Star Cinema).

Digital Movie: "Batad Sa Daang Palay" (Philippine Center for Performing Arts); "Donsol" (Bicycle Pictures); "Inang Yaya" (Unitel Pictures); "Kubrador" (MLR Films); "Rome And Juliet" (Creative Programs Inc./ Cinema One Originals).

Movie Actress: Nora Aunor ("Care Home"/GGS Productions); Andrea del Rosario ("Rome and Juliet"/Creative Programs Inc./Cinema One Originals); Gina Pareño ("Kubrador"/MLR Films); Cherrie Pie Picache ("Kaleldo"/Center Stage Productions); Judy Ann Santos ("Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"/Star Cinema); Maricel Soriano ("Inang Yaya"/Unitel Pictures).

Movie Actor: Ryan Agoncillo ("Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"/Star Cinema); John Arcilla ("Compound"/Hubo Productions); Cesar Montano ("Ligalig"/CM Films); Piolo Pascual ("Don't Give Up On Us"/Star Cinema); Jericho Rosales ("Pacquiao"/FLT Films International/Star Cinema).

Movie Supporting Actress: Pops Fernandez ("Zsa Zsa Zaturnnah"/Regal Entertainment Inc.); Liza Lorena ("Inang Yaya"/Unitel Pictures); Gina Pareno ("Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"/Star Cinema); Cherry Pie Picache ("Twilight Dancer"/Center Stage Productions); Jodi Sta. Maria ("You Are The One"/Star Cinema).

Movie Supporting Actor: Chokoleit ("Zsa Zsa Zaturnnah"/Regal Entertainment Inc.); Johnny Delgado ("Ligalig"/CM Films); Allen Dizon ("Twilight Dancers"/Center Stage Productions); Jay Manalo ("Pacquiao"/FLT Films International); Ronaldo Valdez ("Sukob"/Star Cinema).

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Love 2 Laugh
Ogie Alcasid & Ai-Ai Delas Alas
Musical Direction: Archie Castillo
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Wanted: More creative and evocative movie titles ... please

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW PREDICTABLE AND rehashed movie titles have become? Except for cute and witty exceptions like "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," most titles are of the facile "Agent X-44," "The Promise" and "You Got Me" mold.

What's going on? Have scriptwriters put their creativity on hold? No, it's more like some studio people believing that "safe" titles are more acceptable to viewers than trickily-wackily ones that go far out on a linguistic limb.

They feel that viewers want to know what they're getting. If you're showing a romantic film, call it "Kailangan Kita," not "Bulong ng Puso."

So, studios opt to use titles more like brand names, rather than to evoke the quality and theme of the movies they make.

This is a pity, since twice-used titles tend to lose their individuality and recall value. That's one of the problems of movies (and TV shows) these days—their titles sound so similar that, only a scant year later, viewers have a hard time telling them apart—or even remembering them.

In past years, films were more creatively and memorably titled. We recall "Kakabakaba Ka Ba?" **Mike de Leon**'s movie starring **Christopher de Leon, Charo Santos, Jay Ilagan** and **Sandy Andolong. Edward Palmos'** "Nang Bumuka ang Sampaguita" with **Amy Austria** and **Vic Silayan.**

Studios opt to use titles more like brand names

Celso Ad Castillo's "Uhaw na Dagat" with **Gloria Diaz** and **Elizabeth Oropesa. Armando de Guzman's** "Lukso ng Dugo" with **Mat Ranillo III** and **Charo Santos. Mike de Leon's** "Kisapmata" with **Charo Santos, Jay Ilagan** and **Vic Silayan.**

Eddie Romero's "Kamakalawa" with **Christopher de Leon** and **Tetchie Agbayani. Romy Suzara's** "Uod at Rosas" with **Nora Aunor, Johnny Delgado** and **Lorna Tolentino. Peque Gallaga's** "Oro, Plata, Mata" with **Joel Torre, Cherie Gil** and **Maya Valdez.**

Pablo Santiago's "Kapag Buhay ang Inutang" with **Fernando Poe Jr.** and **Dang Cecilio. Tony Cruz's** "Lintik Lang ang Walang Ganti" with **Dante Varona** and **Elizabeth Oropesa.**

And, one of the best of them all, **Danny Zialcita's** "Nagalit ang Buwan sa Haba ng Gabi" with **Dindo Fernando, Laurice Guillen** and **Janice de Belen!**

Let's hope that today's filmmakers will think up similarly enticing and unique titles to serve as the yummy icing on the cakes of their forthcoming productions.

Feedback

From **Gerald O. Rapadas** of Quezon City: "I congratulate the Ayala Mall cinemas for screening good but uncommercial movies that other theaters pass up. I notice that there's a good crowd, so this proves that there is a good market for quality films in Metro Manila.

"I hope that the Ayala people continue supporting good movies, and that other theaters also do the same. What about occasional retrospectives of the films of the best Filipino directors, like Brocka and Bernal? Promote them as movie events, and film buffs will come. But, please, keep the prices low for students."

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE REPORTED MISSING ON INTERSTATES ANNUALLY...
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WARNING
REMEMBER THESE SAFETY TIPS:
- Notify friends / family when you expect to arrive...
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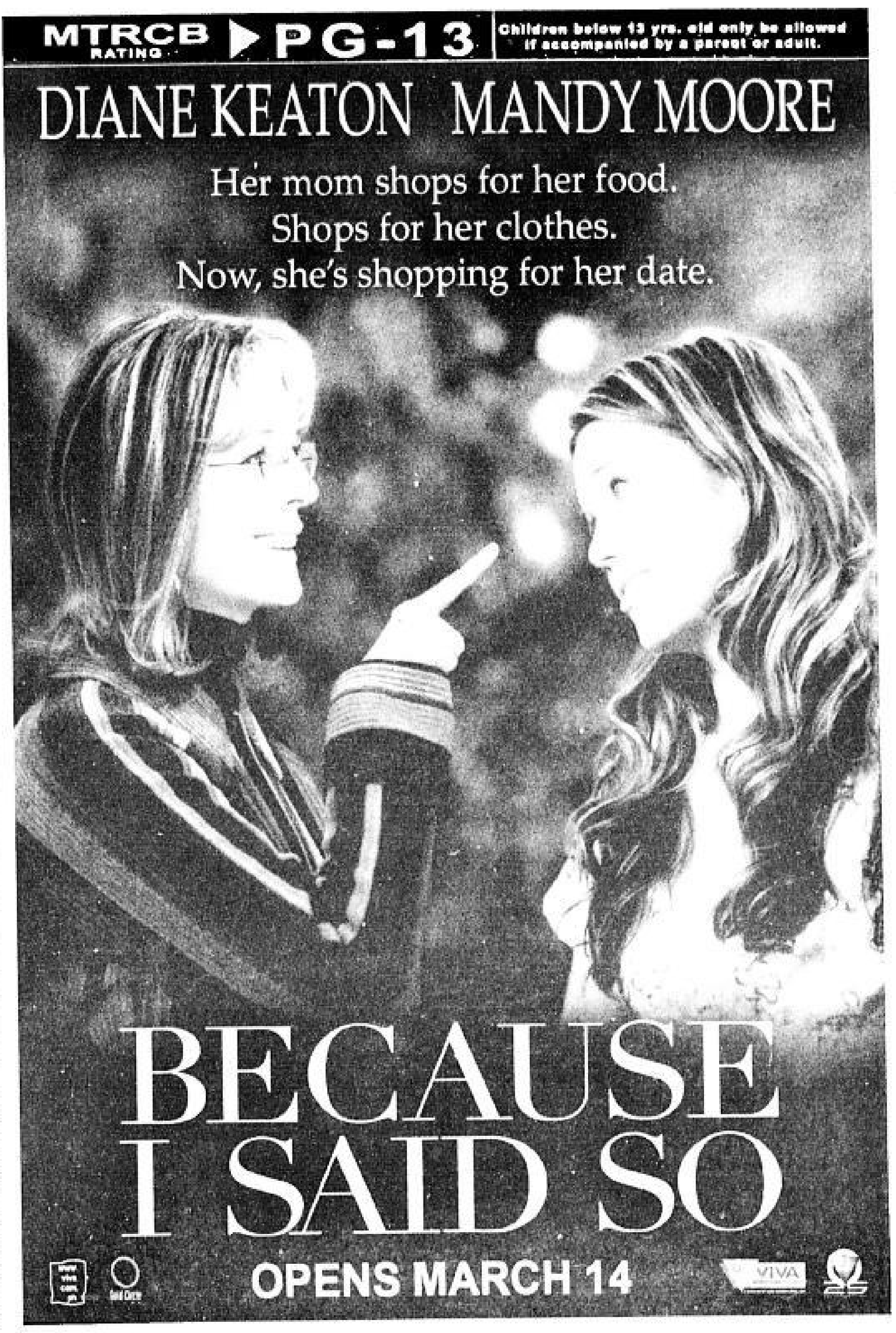
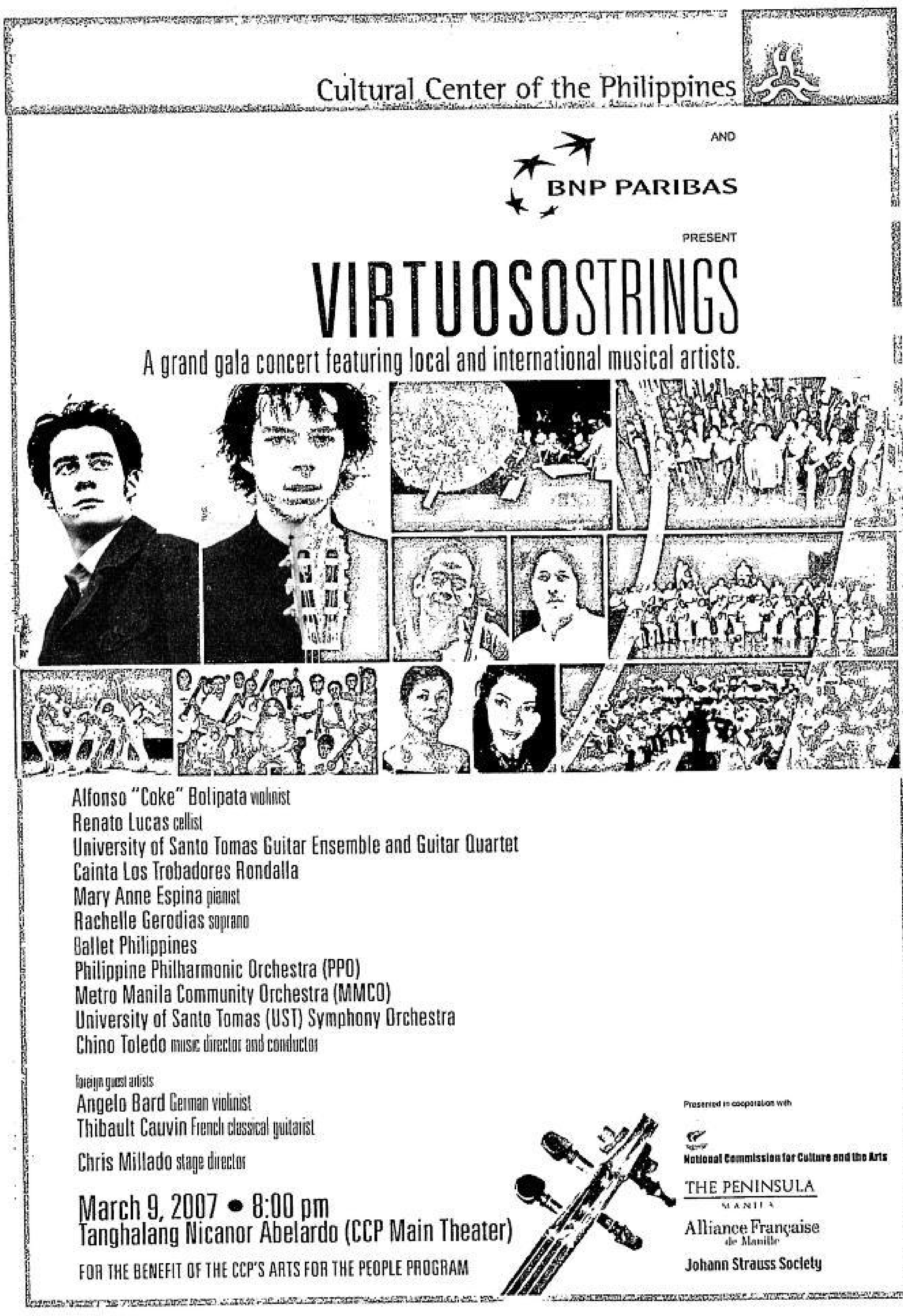

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
DIANE KEATON MANDY MOORE
Her mom shops for her food.
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.
BECAUSE I SAID SO
OPENS MARCH 14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Chino Toledo music director and conductor

foreign guest artists
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Thibault Cauvin French classical guitarist

Chris Millado stage director

March 9, 2007 • 8:00 pm
Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (CCP Main Theater)
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CCP'S ARTS FOR THE PEOPLE PROGRAM

Presented in cooperation with
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THE PENINSULA MANILA
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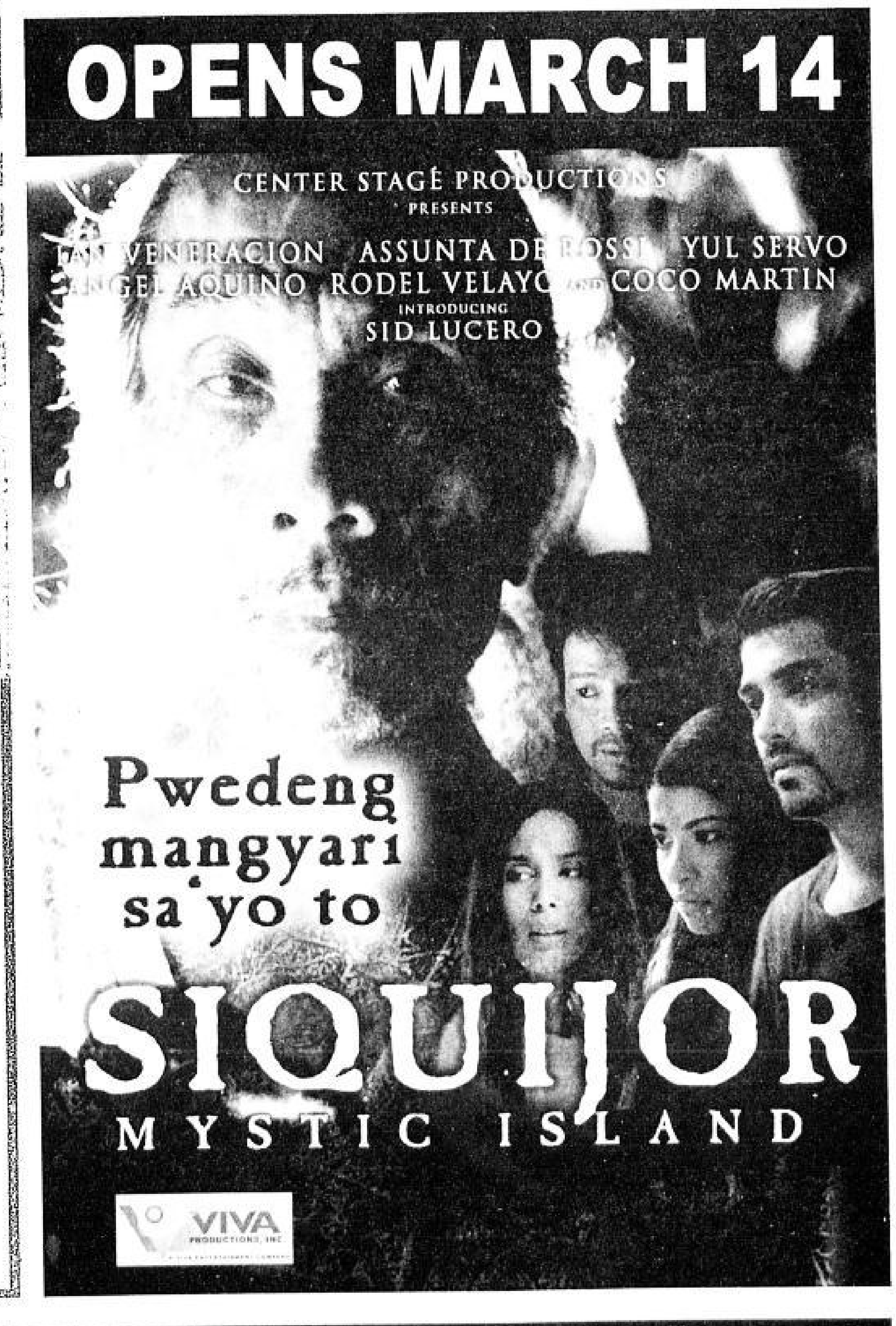
OPENS MARCH 14
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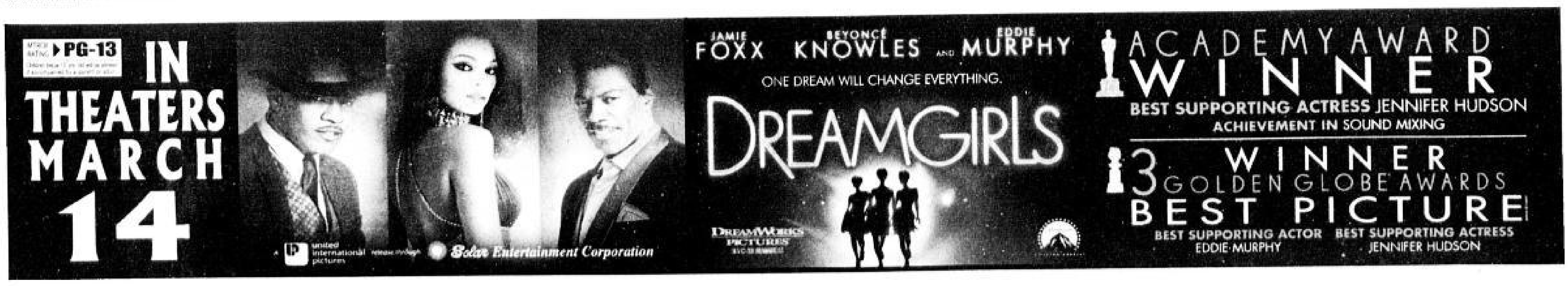
IAN VENERACION ASSUNTA DE ROSSI YUL SERVO
ANGEL AQUINO RODEL VELAYO AND COCO MARTIN
INTRODUCING SID LUCERO
Pwedeng mangyari sa'yo to
SIQUIJOR MYSTIC ISLAND
VIVA PRODUCTIONS, INC.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BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR EDDIE MURPHY
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS JENNIFER HUDSON
united international pictures release through Solar Entertainment Corporation
DREAMWORKS PICTURES

No frontal nudity . . .

From page D1

"Even in that aspect, *bigayan kami. Nauna na siya*. I'm in no hurry."

Love, just like music, is best when savored.

Welcome break

After the James-Hope hullabaloo, **Kris Aquino** is taking a break from her hosting chores in "The Buzz" for the sake of her coming baby. Thank God! Viewers also deserve a much-needed break from her dramatiques ad nauseam!!

Grand walkout

At the birthday bash of **Rudy Fernandez**, guests walked out when a celebrity arrived. One of them muttered, "*Ayaw namin makaharap yan*! Super plastic!" She's better off at a Tupperware party!

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

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2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER
4 (DOLBY) THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) FLUSHED AWAY
MUSIC AND LYRICS

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, China Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 GHOST RIDER
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

Starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 PRIMEVAL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) GHOST RIDER
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 8433994

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

THEATRES
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1 MUSIC & LYRICS
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-5271

1 YOU GOT ME
2 BABEL
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 GHOST RIDER
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 PRIMEVAL
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 YOU GOT ME
9 NUMBER 23
10 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY) PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY) YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
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1 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE PROMISE
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
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1 THE PROMISE
2 THE MESSENGER
3 TROIKA
4 RESERVED

Maragana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 PRIMEVAL
2 APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

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3 (DOLBY) THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PRIMEVAL
4

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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE PROMISE
3 BABEL
4 APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 TROIKA
2 THE PROMISE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 SAPLOT
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 YOU GOT ME
2 RED ROSES
3 THE PROMISE
4 TROIKA
5 THE PROMISE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CODENAME THE CLEANER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 TROIKA
2 THE MESSENGER

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MOVIEWORLD

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1 A GOOD SHEPHERD • THX
2 300
3 indieSine: ROME and JULIET and COMPOUND
4 YOU GOT ME
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
7 DEAD PEOPLE 2
8 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
9 PRIMEVAL
GHOST RIDER
10 THE NUMBER 23
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA

in celebration of THE WOMEN'S MONTH: Witness the Strong Women Characters in the Return Engagement of these INDIE HITS!

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5 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
6 A GOOD SHEPHERD
7 YOU GOT ME

METRO EAST
Ticket Price P100 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 THE NUMBER 23
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 300
4 THE HITCHER
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2
6 A GOOD SHEPHERD
7 PRIMEVAL / GHOST RIDER
8 YOU GOT ME

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price P[illegible] 935-3231 / 935-3228-30

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2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 300
4 THE HITCHER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 A GOOD SHEPHERD

PIONEER
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1 300
2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 A GOOD SHEPHERD
4 THE HITCHER

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price P75 / 80 (049) 837-0907

1 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
2 YOU GOT ME
3 300
4 THE CLEANER
5 HANNIBAL RISING

LIPA
Ticket Price P[illegible] (043) 757-3664 P 90 (043) 312-5870

1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 PRIMEVAL
5 GHOST RIDER

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

ANGELES
Ticket Price P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

IMUS
Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 474-8188

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 YOU GOT ME
5 PRIMEVAL

STARMILLS
Ticket Price P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
5 The PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 PRIMEVAL
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6 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

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2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 TROIKA
5 HANNIBAL RISING
6 APOCALYPTO

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ILOILO

MTRCB Rating: R18

march 07 - 13

Set in the minefields of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they fumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Pierce (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connely) is the family breadwinner.

When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to harass a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGorvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their not-so-responsible actions. It is bitingly funny and nakedly honest critique of middle class dysfunction.

For Screening Schedule, please contact our Cinema Access 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

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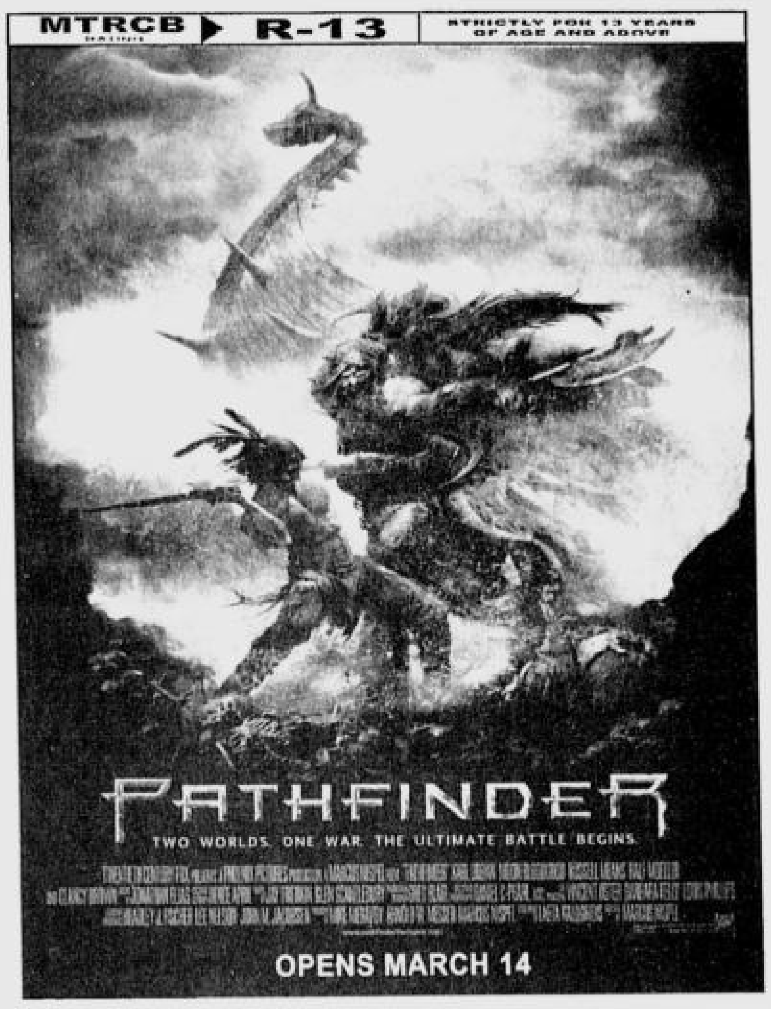
SAN FRANCISCO FILM CRITICS CIRCLE
BEST PICTURE

Little Children
Kate Winslet
Jennifer Connelly
Patrick Wilson

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE


PATHFINDER
TWO WORLDS. ONE WAR. THE ULTIMATE BATTLE BEGINS.

OPENS MARCH 14

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

FLUSHED AWAY G	THE GOOD SHEPHERD R13	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G
300 R13	HITCHER R13	300 R13

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
MTRCB GP
1:55, 4.40, 7:20, 10:00

② 300
MTRCB R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

③ THE HITCHER
MTRCB R-13
1.00, 3.15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

④ THE GOOD SHEPHERD
MTRCB PG-13
12.05, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE FLUSHED AWAY / MUSIC AND LYRICS

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CINEMA 4 A GOOD SHEPHERD
CINEMA 5 300 R-13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	"TABANG" PILITA C., SEC. JOEY LINA, SEC. ANGIE REYES, CHAIRMAN BAYANI F.	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 9, 2007	DAVE	8:30 PM
March 10, 2007	JOHN LESACA	8:00 PM
March 15, 22, 29, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

CHEER FACTOR

Borat wins with 'sexy time'!

LOS ANGELES—"High five!" and "It's sexy time!," favorite expressions of the hit comic character Borat, have topped the Hollywood phrases of the year list. The Global Language Monitor, a nonprofit group that monitors word use, put those two expressions at the top of its annual list of Hollywood words and phrases for the impact they made. *Reuters*

in celebration
of THE WOMEN'S MONTH:
Witness the Strong
Women Characters
in the Return Engagement
of these INDIE HITS!

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GALLERIA
March 07 to 13

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Gateway Cineplex*10

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300 12:10 / 2:05 / 2:40 / 4:35 5:10 / 7:05 / 7:40 / 9:35 / 10:10	THE GOOD SHEPHERD 11:45 / 3:00 / 6:15 / 9:30	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50	
THE HITCHER 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	DEAD PEOPLE 2 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	GHOST RIDER 4:50 / 9:40	
YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	MUSIC & LYRICS 12:30 / 2:40 / 7:20	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	300 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

Mall 5

1	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20	2	THE GOOD SHEPHERD 12:20 R5 / 2:15 / 5:30 / 8:45	3	300
4	DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	5	YOU GOT ME 12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20		

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www.aranetacoliseum.com

PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
Mar 7, Wed. 4:35 Sta Lucia vs Air 21 7:20 Talk N Text vs Alaska

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Mar 9, Friday 8 pm

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... LARRY KING

"Spellbinding...Mesmerizing"
David Ansen, Newsweek

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The untold story of the most powerful covert agency in the world.
OPENS TODAY

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glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	300	THE HITCHER	YOU GOT ME			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	YOU GOT ME	THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	THE HITCHER	NOTES ON A SCANDAL	THE GOOD SHEPHERD	EPIC MOVIE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	300					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX THE GOOD SHEPHERD GUARANTEED SEATS	THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	NOTES ON A SCANDAL GUARANTEED SEATS	300 GUARANTEED SEATS	THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	THE GOOD SHEPHERD	YOU GOT ME	THE HITCHER		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	300	THE HITCHER	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	YOU GOT ME			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	300	THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	THE GOOD SHEPHERD	THE HITCHER	YOU GOT ME		

At the Activity Center

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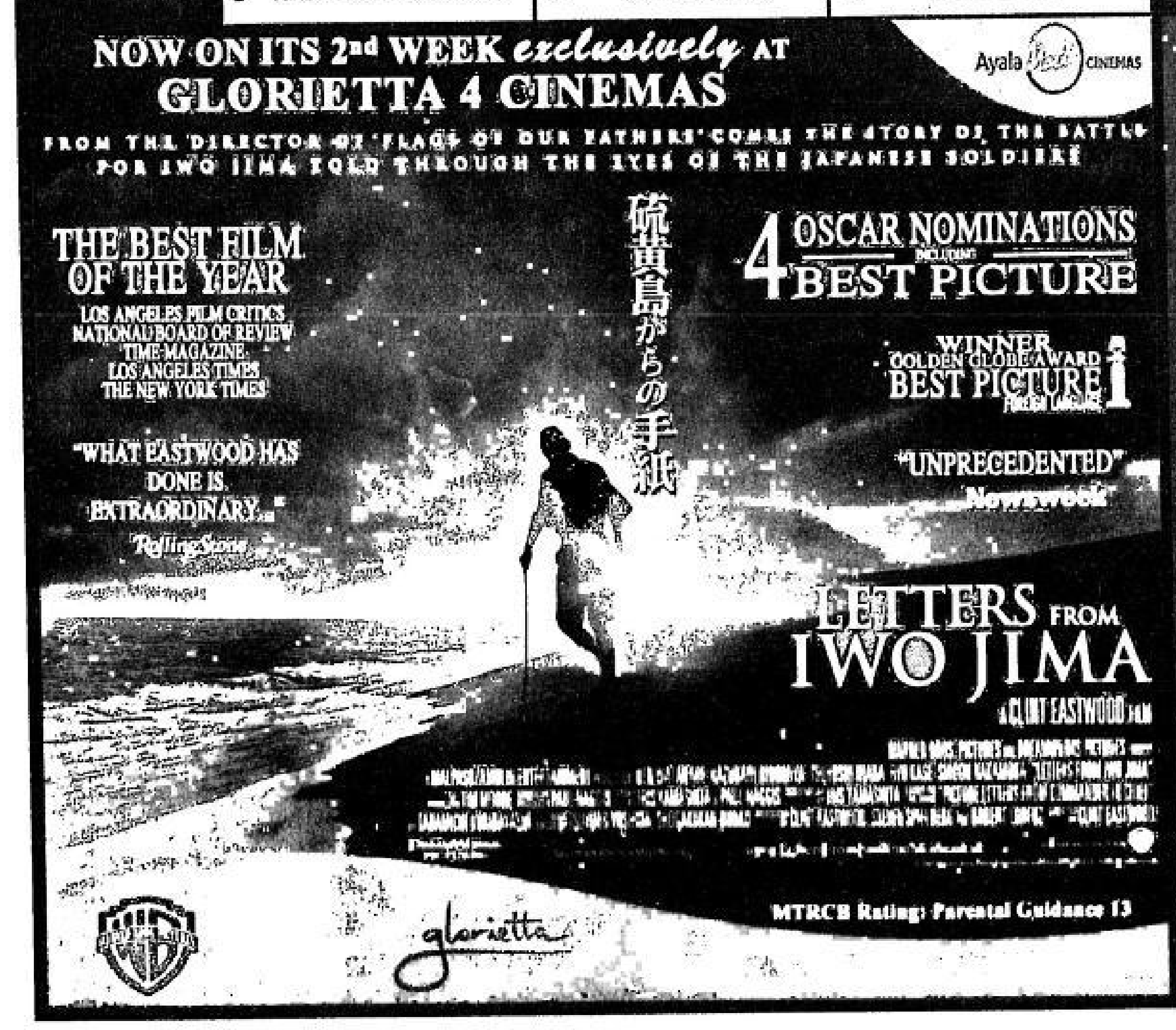
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Anson's Exhibit March 5 to 23, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 16 to 18, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 9 to 11, 2007

GREENBELT
Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario
March 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS
at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM
CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org



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Newsweek

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA
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MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

Ayala Malls CINEMAS
硫黄島からの手紙
glorietta

Looney Tunes presents...
Lights, Camera... SHOWTIME!

Come & join Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Tweety, Sylvester, Taz and Marvin the Martian in a live musical show only at Ayala Malls

Glorietta
Glorietta Activity Center
February 23-25, 2007
11am, 3pm & 6pm

Alabang Town Center
Activity Center
March 2-4, 2007
11am, 3pm & 6pm

Market! Market!
Activity Center
March 9-11, 2007
3pm & 6pm

Ayala Center Cebu
Activity Center
March 16-18, 2007
11am, 3pm & 6pm

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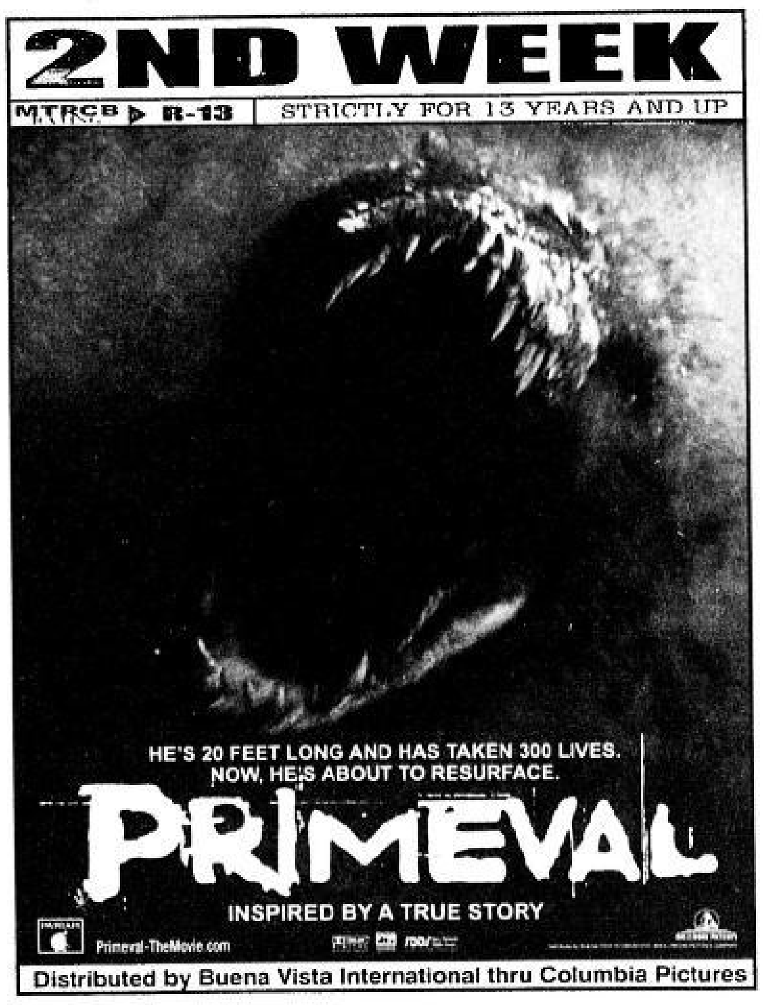
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Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?

Stars Andy Bais, Mica Torre, Ricky Davao, Nanette Inventor, Caridad Sanchez

Directed by Florida Bautista

An entry in the most recent Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival, this musical-comedy tells the story of good-natured Tikyo (Bais), a middle-aged ice-cream vendor searching for his missing mother (Sanchez) with the help of a feisty girl who dreams of becoming a singing champ (Torre). Rito P. Asilo of the Inquirer finds it "fast-paced and technically polished... [but] bogged down by its awkward lurches in thematic tone and focus." Ronald G. Mangubat of the Inquirer commends it: "a breath of fresh air ... [it] unveils insights on love, faith, trust and the beauty of life amidst the fetid squalor of urban slums." Exclusively in SM Digital Cinemas.

300

Stars Gerald Butler, Lena Headey, David Wenham, Rodrigo Santoro, Dominic West

Directed by Zack Snyder

Adapted from the popular graphic novel by Frank Miller, this film is touted as "a ferocious retelling" of the ancient Battle of Thermopylae—in which 300 Spartans, led by King Leonidas (Butler), fought with thousands of Persians. Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter raves: "In epic battle scenes ... [the director] combines breathtaking and fluid choreography, gorgeous 3-D drawings and visual effects." Todd McCarthy of Variety hails it as "blustery, bombastic, visually arresting ... Possibly nowhere outside of gay porn has so many broad shoulders, bulging biceps and ripped torsos been seen onscreen." Josh Tyler of CinemaBlend.com calls its "careful costuming and sensuous style ... intensely erotic."

The Pursuit of Happyness

Stars Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Thandie Newton, Dan Castellaneta

Directed by Gabrielle Muccino

Inspired by the true-life tale of Chris Gardner (Will Smith), a homeless man who must care for his child (Will's real-life son Jaden) while trying to survive the mean streets of 1980s San Francisco. Kevin Crust of Los Angeles Times comments that "the man's struggles are emotionally engaging but, dramatically, it lacks the layering of 'Kramer vs. Kramer.'" Kyle Smith of New York Post says it's "a viral blast of the American Dream. It's 'Rocky' with a briefcase." Toddy Burton of The Austin Chronicle opines: "Though pretty to look at and inspiring to contemplate, this story of human triumph needs a lot more of the human for an audience to actually experience the triumph."

The Good Shepherd

Stars Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie, Joe Pesci, John Turturro, Alec Baldwin

Directed by Robert De Niro

The history of the Central Intelligence Agency is recounted through the fictional story of a Yale student (Damon), an idealist confronted with the realities of Cold War-era spy games. David Ansen of Newsweek thinks actor De Niro's second film "is nothing if not ambitious ... Still, even if the movie's vast reach exceeds its grasp, it's a spellbinding history lesson." Peter Travers of Rolling Stone points out that the director has "mounted a handsome production ... You have to admire his moxie." Gene Seymour of Newsday states: "Imagine a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant version of the first two 'Godfather' movies drained of operatic passion, but left with all their epochal sweep, double-dealing violence and richly detailed verisimilitude."

Notes on a Scandal

Stars Judi Dench, Cate Blanchett, Bill Nighy, Andrew Simpson

Directed by Richard Eyre

Based on Zoe Heller's novel, this psychological tug-of-war pits an aging history teacher (Dench) against her crush, a younger colleague (Blanchett) with a damaging secret. Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian relates that, "with some audacity, the spirits of both Hitchcock and Nabokov are invoked in this delectable adaptation." Ty Burr of Boston Globe describes it as "a nice mug of poisoned eggnog for the holiday season—a movie so smart and entertaining you almost don't feel its chill sicken your bones." David Denby of New Yorker agrees: "I would hate to see moviegoers deny themselves the pleasures [of this movie] on the ground that both women behave badly ... In England, it seems, actresses have nothing to fear from age. They can simply wait for writers to create fresh work for them."

"NOTES ON A SCANDAL"

The Hitcher

Stars Sean Bean, Sophia Bush, Zachary Knighton, Neal McDonough

Directed by Dave Meyers

A remake of a 1986 slasher flick of the same title, this screamfest follows a lovely young couple (Bush and Knighton) on the road as they are stalked by a psychotic killer (Bean). Matt Zoller Seitz of New York Times states that "the mix of mystical solemnity and chain-reaction slapstick suggests a Road Runner cartoon directed by John Woo." Ronnie Scheib of Variety rants that the "original is gutted of all originality, sexual ambiguity and tension leaving behind a generic chase." Mark Olsen of Los Angeles Times concurs: "[An] LA Weekly article ... is far darker and more unsettling than anything that happens onscreen here ... just plain bad and boring to boot."

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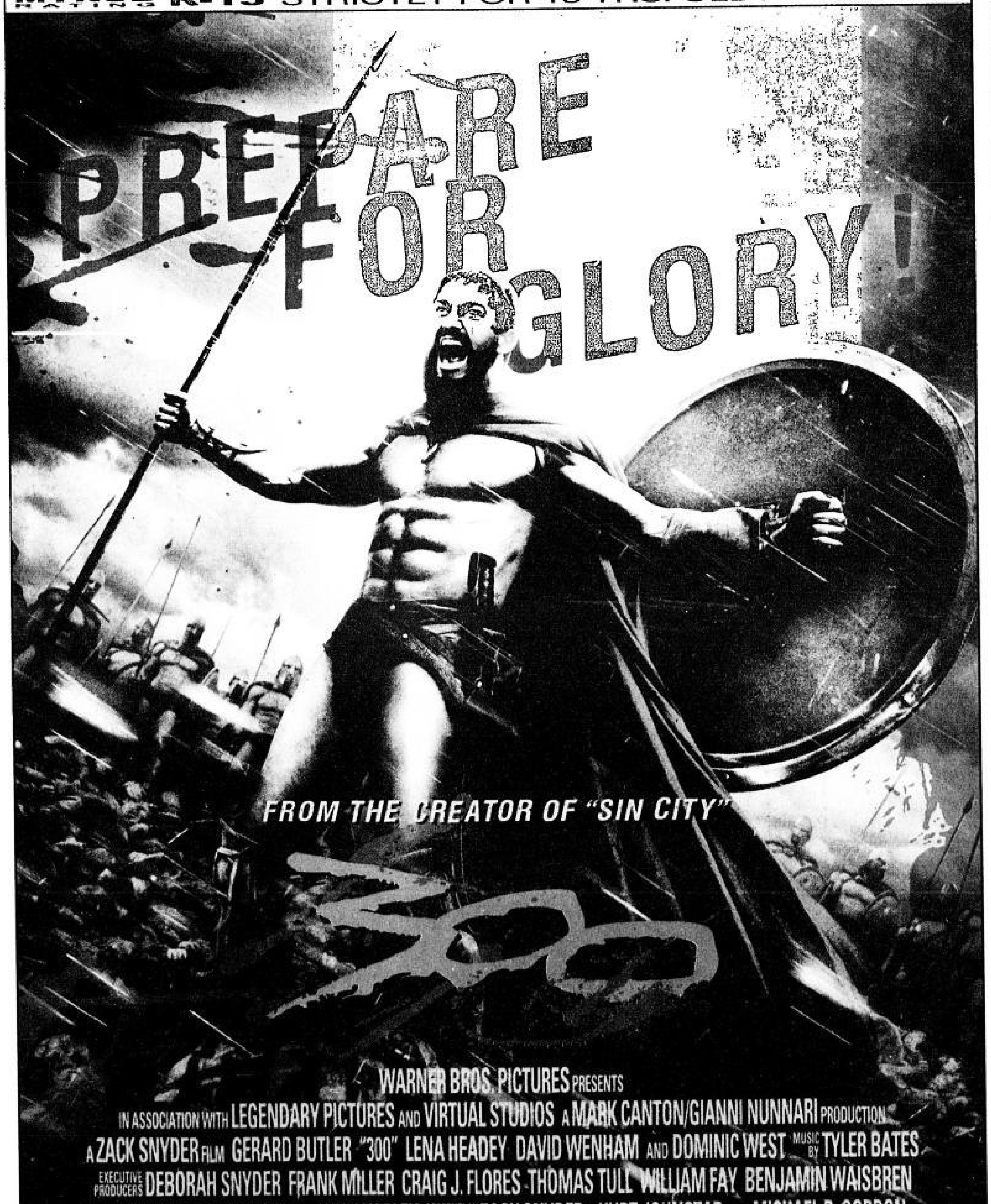
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300

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WINNER Will Smith
WINNER Jaden Christopher Syre Smith
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1 300
12:15, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25,11:10
R 13

2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
12:40, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
PG 13

3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
1:30, 4:50, 8:10, 11:20
R 13

4 THE HITCHER
1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55
R 13